

Gurumat Siddhant

गुरुमत सिद्धांत

A Science of Spirituality Scripture for Dawn of the Golden Era



Written by Param Sant Kirpal Singh (R)
Dedicated to Hazur Baba Sawan Singh (L)

Part I-B.

Gurumat Siddhant
(Principles of the Path of Perfect Masters-
Sant-Mat or Surat-Shabd Yoga)

An abridged Translation from the Gurmukhi / Punjabi Original:
'Gurmat Sidhant'



*Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters Who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at Whose Lotus Feet the writer
imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam -- the Word.*

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LOVE (*Prem* प्रेम)

It is not easy to understand love, because its true nature and greatness cannot be described in words. It is a pure and delicate feeling or emotion, which can be experienced only by one who is in love. It is beyond the capacity of the tongue or the pen to describe it in any human language. Actually, love is another name for God. And just as it is not possible to reduce God's greatness to mortal dimensions, so also is it not possible to describe adequately in any words known to man, the grandeur and sublime appearance of love.

Nowadays, people misunderstand the meaning of love. The spirit and the meaning of love can be ascertained only from a true lover, and its glow or spark can only be seen on his countenance. If you wish to hear it described, you should ask Mansur or Christ, both of whom went to their death serene and filled with joy. You might even ask Meerabai, who drank a cup of poison as though it were nectar. You could also ask Guru Arjan. He sat on hot iron plates, and exclaimed, Thy Will is sweet!

Surrendering one's life to the path of love, gives to life a unique and exquisite taste, which can be enjoyed only by a lover or by one, whose eyes bespeak intense love. Love is a beautiful and sublime experience of the heart. Books are full of the word love, but in the tears of love are flowing burning oceans. In the sighs of love there are thousands of tempests, and in the world of love there is no sense of time. A place, where there is love becomes sanctified by it. In that environment, there is a powerful current of exaltation, but it can be felt only by a heart that is filled with love. If we perform our domestic and other worldly duties with love, we shall

enjoy our life in comfort and without any worries, because in the presence of love, the mind and intellect are powerless to disturb one's inner calmness. Love does not influence only human beings; even the animals and birds are subject to its elevating influence.

Love is a complete cure for every kind of trouble. Maulana Rumi says,

शाद बाश ऐ इश्क़े—खुश सौदाए मा, ऐ तबीबे—जुमला इल्लतहाए मा ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 1, पृ० 33)

O! The intoxication of my love – be happy, well and strong; for you are the only physician and cure for all my ailments.

If we could experience true love, we would be our own physicians and could bring peace and happiness to ourselves. Then all our pain and sadness because of our separation from the Lord, which are caused by our not understanding the principles of love, would vanish and the radiant currents of joy would fill and invigorate our minds.

It is love alone that can give peace and happiness. Without it life is dry and worthless, and even the joys of heaven are of no value. A palace will appear as dreadful as a graveyard to a person who is bereft of love. But even the ill-furnished and dilapidated huts are beautiful, if they are brightened with the spark of love. Through love, even jungles become filled with happy life and without love, populated cities may appear bleak.

Love is the richest of all treasures. Without it, there is nothing and with it, there is everything. He who does not have love in his heart, is not entitled to call himself a human being.

The world is beautiful and we are naturally attracted towards it, because the Creator of both man and the world is the same God, who is love. God has filled both man and the world with currents of love, and the world is supported by love. Love's magnetic power is at work throughout the entire world. The sun, moon, earth, stars, sky – all are sending out currents of love to others.

Man has been created in the image of God, and God is love. Therefore, His quality of love is predominant in the world. Because man possesses the quality of love within himself, the entire universe, which also contains strong currents of love, is constantly attracting man towards it.

Wherever there is love, there is life. Where there is no love, life is worthless. Actually, a man is not a true man, unless he has within him the Divine Spark of Love. God, in the form of love, is within everybody. Those whose eyes are open, see all human beings as manifestations of God, like rays of the sun or the waves of the ocean. They know that the same spark of love has created them all. Therefore, who can be low or who can be high? Men in different positions of life and in different countries – be they yogis, sanyasis, brahmacharis, Hindus or Turks – are all one in His eyes; and differences of caste, creed or country can never be of any importance to those who possess the quality of love. There is one God in heaven and one family on earth. Maulana Rumi says,

हरदम बजाते—जुमला अयान अस्त आं यके,
 दर जुमला हस्त ओ बूद निहान अस्त आं यके ।
 दर सूरते—बशर तू निगाहे चिह् मी कुनी,
 नै नै बशर कुजास्त अयान अस्त आं यके ॥

-- मौलाना रुमी

The current of love from the One God is flowing through the entire universe. What do you think when you look at the face of a man? Look at him carefully. He is not a man, but a current of the Essence of God (love), which permeates him.

Lord Krishna says,

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
 तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

-- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (6:30)

He who is able to see My lustrous form in everything, who realizes that there is no difference between different beings, is, in fact, the true seer. Such a person I can never forget.

God looks on all beings as the same. No one is better or worse than another. In His eyes, there are no nationalities, races or creeds. For Him, all are His creatures. A person who understands this Truth, is not capable of hating anybody. He is a lover of God, whose Light shines in all human beings. He loves everybody. People of all faiths – Hindus, Moham-medans, Sikhs and Christians – are the recipients of His love. All religious Scriptures, Saints and Masters have always preached this Truth: we should love every created being. According to the Bible, Christ said:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. (St. Matthew 5:43,44)

A lover points out, by his own example, that the real way to love God is not through outer observances. Quarrels and disputes amongst persons of various beliefs are due to narrow-minded intolerance. Those who confine their love to their own countries or nations, are also subject to the same narrow-mindedness. But one who places the ideal of love above everything else in his daily life, is really following the command of his Lord. He is loved by the Lord.

A person who does not follow the path of love, is not honoured into the Court of the Lord. Such a one is entangled in the miseries of the world, and whosoever comes in contact with him, is also miserable. It is the natural desire of all human beings to be happy, and happiness is the fruit of concentration of the mind. This treasure of concentration and happiness of mind, can easily be obtained through love, because these qualities are the natural attributes of love. Without love, everything in this world becomes subject to miseries and misunderstandings, which cause domestic quarrels, religious disputes, bloodshed and even wars among the nations.

Man naturally desires peace of mind. He wants to be free from cares and anxieties. All this can be achieved only

through love. Those who do not follow the path of love, cannot have a calm mind, and these people also create difficulties for others. Without a serene mind, even the pleasures of this world are full of pain. Happiness cannot be achieved without love.

Love is not dependent upon anything else. It is an ocean of faith and fortitude. It is an ocean of strength and faith. It imparts peace and serenity to the mind and to life. It is of real and lasting value. All the things of this world appear beautiful, when there is love. By the currents of love, the entire atmosphere is charged with joy, and the spark of God's light is visible in love.

One who is imbued with love, is prepared to sacrifice even his life willingly, and he does not follow the path of intellectual quibbling. There is no song that is sweeter than the song of love, nor is there any story more enchanting; in fact, the very form of God is love.

There are many valuable gifts of God in this world, such as wealth, beauty, strength, power, good health, knowledge, fluency of speech and worship. Man is naturally fond of these things, but they are all lacking in something. Wealth makes a man proud. Beauty makes him blind.

Power and good health are the cause of cruelty and arrogance. Knowledge brings in selfish ideas. Intellect is a delusion, and to indulge in clever speeches leads one to falsehood and to garrulous talk. External religious observances and worship are the cause of narrow-mindedness and bigotry. Better than all these gifts of God is the gift of love. And such gifts are beneficial, if they are combined with the sweetness of love.

God is love. He is the Bestower and demands nothing in exchange for His gifts. Similarly, love demands nothing in return. It knows only how to give; hence, it is free from all selfishness. A true husband gives everything he has to his wife. True parents are those, who rear their children with love and expect nothing in return from them.

Love inspires generosity and obliterates selfishness, because it has no ulterior motive. If everyone in the world would live in the spirit of love, no worldly laws would be necessary. We need these laws, because all have not learned to live in love, and as a result the world is entangled in a network of animal-like tendencies. If we would learn to love ourselves, our neighbours, our country and the whole of mankind, and God Himself, we should no longer be in need of worldly laws, because love begets love. Then there would be no lack of harmony or trust among the nations, and the only ruling power would be that of love. Christ says,

Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. (St. Matthew 6:10)

That Kingdom is in our hearts. There (in the realm of love) no law is necessary.

So long as we do not love each other, there can be no peace in this world. Warships, armies, ammunition, submarines, cannons, tanks and atom bombs cannot create peace and harmony in the world. If we are engrossed in these things, we are thinking of things that will bring destruction to mankind, and thereby are responsible for cutting our own throats. The present-day wars give a clear picture of this situation. If, on the other hand, we were to love and understand each other, the result would be that we would live in peace, because in love there is no warfare. If we think of war and make preparations for it, talk about it and also hope for it, then we shall bring war upon ourselves. But if we think of love, plan and live with hearts filled with love and talk about the blessings of love, then we shall get nothing but love. If our environment and the entire universe should receive nothing but rays of love (from everyone in the world), then there would be no need for any worldly laws. Wherever there is love there is no (need for) law.

When St. John became so old that he was not able to walk and was able to speak only with great difficulty, another follower of Christ took him to a gathering of children to deliver a sermon. He raised his head and said:

Little children, love one another.

Once again, he said this and then repeated it a third time, after which he was silent.

At that the people closest to him said,

Good man, haven't you anything more important to say to these children?

To this he replied:

I give this advice over and over again, because of all the qualities, that of love is the greatest need of mankind. If you would love each other and the current of love would fill your minds, you would possess all other good qualities. Love, and all things shall be added unto you.

If you love, you will be a wise man. And when you become a wise man, you will definitely love. If a person is not good, he cannot be a loving soul. Guru Ram Das says,

जिन अंतरि हरि हरि प्रीति है ते जन सुघड सिआणे राम राजे ॥

जे बाहरहु भुलि चुकि बोलदे भी खरे हरि भाणे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 450)

Those in this world, who have love for the Lord, possess real knowledge, and if by chance they utter any harsh word, they do not hurt anybody because they do not forget the spirit of love, and therefore love everybody. They are the chosen ones of God.

Guru Nanak says,

प्रिअ सिउ प्रीति न उलटै कबहू जो तै भावै साई ॥

नीद गई हउमै तिन थाकी सच मिति रदै समाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 1, पृ० 1274)

O God, if it pleases You, only then does one really and truly make an attempt to love. The love of Your devotees is constantly directed towards You. In such a state of love they do not care for sleep. Sleep is gone, and egotism is exhausted from the body; the heart is permeated with the Teachings of Truth.

In love, all the bad qualities of the mind and intellect such as anger, sloth, talking ill of others, hatred, and so forth, are removed, and we are able to control our mind by means of love. Love reigns over everything. It is so beautiful that wherever it abides, anger, hatred, and other similar emotions cannot exist.

The mind is like a crow, which has no other wish than to annoy people. But as soon as it is steeped in love, it becomes a swan and troubles no one.

Love is a soul quality and is inherent in all of us, but not everyone can avail himself of it. This ocean of all joys is within us, and we need not spend a penny to achieve it. As soon as the soul is freed from the filth and attachments of the world, real love automatically makes its appearance.

Guru Arjan says,

अति सुंदर कुलीन चतुर मुखि डिआनी धनवंत ॥

मिरतक कहीअहि नानका जिह प्रीति नही भगवंत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडी म० 5, पृ० 253)

A man may be extremely handsome, clever, learned and wealthy, and may have in him many other good qualities, but if he has not developed the love of God in himself, O Nanak he should be considered the same as a corpse.

Love is the cream of life. It is the beauty of the souls. By means of love the soul is brightened and its glow is reflected on the face of the lover. Farid says,

जोबन जांदे ना डरां जे सह प्रीति न जाइ ॥

फरीदा कीर्ती जोबन प्रीति बिनु सुकि गए कुमलाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1379)

I am not afraid of losing my youth, provided my love for God does not diminish, for many a youth has withered away for lack of love for God. (Farid)

The kingdom of love has been the highest of all realms in every age, and every Saint has said:

Love God and love His creation.

If we really love Him, then we automatically love His creatures. To love everybody, is to help one's own self. If one is engaged in business or a profession and does his work with love, he will never cheat anyone nor deprive other persons of their rightful due. The world is always prepared to listen to the message of love, because it is inherent in all of us; and if we practice it daily, it becomes manifest in us.

A Saint may not write Scriptures, may not build a temple, or may not give anything in charity, but loves every-

one; he is loved by all. The well-being of this world depends on our loving everybody, or rather on all loving each other. In order to learn this, we must abandon anger, indolence, talking ill of others, hatred, and all other similar bad habits. A true lover is not confined to any one language or creed. He crosses all such boundaries and loves everybody. Love is the fulfilment of the law. If you love, then you are not doing only a single act, but many more without your realizing it. By loving, you send forth the currents of love far and wide in your environment and thus, benefit the whole world.

Love is the greatest and most wonderful constituent of goodness. A truly loving man is actually the king of kings. How can anyone praise God without love? Or how can anyone serve his country? He, who has not developed the spark of love in his heart, may appear to be living, but he is dead within. The entire universe is beautified by the glory of love.

Those who profess to be lovers of God and His Saints, but hate one another and are prepared to fight and quarrel with each other on account of their narrow-minded beliefs, cannot even be called human beings, much less devotees of God. Love is the greatest of all gifts, because it instils life into dead hearts. It is intoxication, and in its ecstasy one is filled with bliss and his ego is destroyed.

People say that love is blind and mad, because a lover does not listen to anyone. But the lover of God is not blind. He has eyes that see the Truth. He sees only that One whom he wishes to see. He accepts only that One and believes in Him. He is not mad. He gives his heart to One alone, and is free from duality.

Love is the Divine Law. It will triumph where reason fails.

It is not possible to describe the sweetness of love's qualities. Its flavour is so enrapturing, that no one wishes to stop tasting it. Its fragrance refreshes the mind and gladdens the intellect, and a lover is always in high good spirits. Love has the power of magnetic attraction, and draws all beings into the sphere of its Divine Power.

Love is God

Prior to the creation of this world, God was a vast ocean like All-Consciousness. He was all love, all bliss and self-sufficient. God was everything in Himself and was in a state of blissful quiescence. And His basic form was love. It was not love for any other being, because none existed. It was for Himself. It was part and parcel of Himself, and He did not have to depend on anything else for this. Such is the indescribable condition of love. But we may illustrate it to some extent by an example:

Suppose that you are in love with the Lord and have completely merged yourself in Him. Then your own self has been forgotten, your body and mind will be numb, and everything will be forgotten except your love for Him. You then lose yourself in the bliss of contemplating on His love, so much so that there is no difference between I and You, and you become bliss-incarnate.

You cannot describe that state of mind, because God is love and love is God. Both are one and the same, and both are indescribable. God, in Himself, is a deep ocean of love. We cannot compare the bliss of contemplating His love with any other type of happiness or bliss.

Love is a quality of such a kind that it cannot be described in speech or in writing. If anything, it can be compared to a magnet which has extremely powerful attraction. Love was in the beginning of the world, and its influence is even now permeating all material and spiritual regions, whether visible or invisible. That is how all things are attracted towards each other, and this world is inexistence.

Everything is the Result of Love

God is love, and love was in the beginning. The entire creation is the result of love. We have been sent down into this world through love, and the cause of our return will also be love. The Path of love is the real ideal. Whosoever is following this path is following the True Path.

Shams-i-Tabrez describes love as follows:

कुफ्रो—इस्लाम कनूं आमदा ओ इश्क अज तुस्त,
काफिरे रा किह कुशद इश्क जि कुप्फार मगीर।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 157)

Islam and disbelief are of recent origin, but love and God existed even before the creation of this world. Therefore, if any person becomes a victim of love, you should not call him an disbeliever.

Love is the State of giving away One's Heart

Nothing that has been created in this world is devoid of love. Love in its full and complete form was the Ocean of Bliss. Therefore, in the Ocean of God's Bliss, there was nothing but Bliss and Oneness only.

The meaning of Prem प्रेम (love) is the merging of one's self into the object of love. It has a wonderful attraction or strong pulling power. The word 'Prem' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'pre पृ', which means a thing, that pleases the heart and attracts it. Another definition of 'Prem' is a surrender of the heart.

How does one give away his heart? It is done by casting attentive and loving eyes at the beloved, while directing towards him the currents of loving emotions. The lover sees no faults in the beloved and considers him to be worthy of his high regard for him. This is giving away one's heart.

Who is a lover? He is a person, who becomes a slave of his beloved. After having placed his heart in the hands of the beloved, he roams about in constant anguish of separation.

The natural quality of love is remembrance with a concentrated mind. Concentration is the sequence of intense love. It is a feeling of self-forgetfulness.

Love is the term used for giving away one's heart on beholding another's attractive form or qualities, and having warm feeling in the heart for that being.

Love is that, which transforms the small drop of the soul into the ocean of God. Love is also that, which diverts the mind from all desires of the world and attaches it to the one Beloved, i.e., the Lord.

Love has a concentrating force, which is produced, when love is attained to the highest and the fullest extent. It is a condition, in which, the lover completely forgets himself. In order to tread the path of love, one has to forget oneself entirely. By thus losing himself, the lover is able to gain Life Eternal. Such a condition is by no means lassitude of mind, but rather an awakening of the energies, which enable one to merge oneself forever in the consciousness of the Lord. Love is an infinite, endless ocean, which cannot be described.

Condition of a Lover

Love is a music, whose beauty does not diminish. It is a pain, which is full of sweetness. It is a feeling which, once experienced, can never be forgotten. If you wish to know about love, you should ask a worshipper of love, or you may ask a nightingale that has fallen in love with a rose. Or you may ask a moth, that has sacrificed its life, without hesitation, for the flame. Therefore, do not ask about love from any other person except a lover himself, because he alone can tell you anything about it.

Only a lover knows how to describe love. In his own beautiful and well-chosen words, he will help you to understand it clearly.

If you wish to see the spark of love, you should look into the eyes of one who is intoxicated with love. Then you will see how all intellect, reason, knowledge, mind and thinking have been swept away and have merged into the ocean of thoughts of the Beloved. From such a one, you may get some idea of love.

Saints are an ocean of love, because they are already merged into the Lord, and the Lord is love. The currents of love emanating from the Saints spread out and influence every nook and corner of the world. By receiving such currents, one's heart is inclined to meet the Lord.

Love, in which there is even a small amount of selfishness or selfish desires, or even a tiny thought of some

bargain, is not real love. True love is only for the sake of love itself. The only wish of a true lover is to be united with the Beloved. Love is awakened when the currents of love, which emanate from the Beloved, enter into our hearts. This is true love, and it is not dependent on any outside influence.

What is love (Prem)? This is a question the answer to which is in the hands of a lover. Others cannot understand even a small fraction of it.

If you wish to know about love, go to a Saint and ask Him. If you want to know how the heart goes out of your hands, ask one who has lost His heart.

True Love implies giving up the Ego

What is true love? Shams Tabriz said that it is the surrendering of one's own self. Unless one's self is completely surrendered, nothing can be achieved on the path of love. There is no half way.

The mind should be cleansed of all thoughts and desires, and thus become like a highly polished mirror. So long as one entertains greed and desires in his heart, the face of love will not be visible. By love alone, the Saints achieve conscious union with the Lord. In other words, if there is any self-interest then it is not true love.

Love is a constant Magnet

Everybody talks about love, but very few really know what it is. Sometimes a person thinks he is in love, and at another time he is not in love. Sometimes he is sad in love, and sometimes he is happy. This is not true love, for true love is constant and keeps the lover's mind fixed in one direction. It has nothing to do with the rise and fall of emotions, because a true lover is constantly absorbed in one thought alone – that of the Beloved. Kabir says,

प्रेम प्रेम सब कोइ कहै, प्रेम न चीन्है कोय ।

आठ पहर भीना रहै, प्रेम कहावै सोय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 8, पृ० 46)

आया प्रेम कहाँ गया, देखा था सब कोय ॥

छिन रोवै छिन में हँसै, सो तो प्रेम न होय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 7, पृ० 46)

Everyone talks about love, but no one knows anything about it. One who is absorbed in it day and night alone knows love.

There was one who once loved, but where has his love gone? He laughs and cries. Many people have seen him in this ever-changing condition. This is not true love.

Guru Ram Das says,

मै मनि तनि प्रेमु पिरम का अटे पहर लगनि ॥

जन नानक किरपा धारि प्रभ सतिगुर सुखि वसनि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी की वार म० 4, पृ० 301)

Those who have fallen in love with God are constantly absorbed in love. Shower Your Mercy upon servant Nanak, O God, that he may dwell in peace with the True Guru.

True Love is Permanent

God is Love. He is omnipresent. The soul is a drop of that ocean and it swims like a fish back into that ocean. Once the magnetic power of love establishes itself in a mind, it will never be destroyed. Guru Arjan says,

लागी प्रीति न तूटै मूले ॥ हरि अंतरि बाहरि रहिआ भरपूरे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 105)

Love has a unique pulling power. Once a person experiences it, he becomes so completely absorbed in it that even if he wishes to leave, it will not cease nor vanish.

Guru Amar Das says,

कितै प्रकारि न तूटउ प्रीति ॥ दास तेरे की निरमल रीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (छासासी म० 5, पृ० 684)

True love is permanent. Pens and ink pots, as well as writings made with them, become obliterated; but true love for God, which has been bestowed by Him, will never be effaced.

Guru Arjan says,

मू लालन सिउ प्रीति बनी ॥

तोरी न तूटै छोरी न छूटै ऐसी माधो खिंच तनी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 827)

I have fallen in love with my Beloved Lord. Cutting it, it does not break, and releasing it, it does not let go – such is the string the Lord has tied me with.

Love has been in existence in all ages. It will never vanish from the world. If one has true love, then by seeing his Beloved he becomes indescribably happy. Persons in whom the love of God has been awakened, and who are happily absorbed in it, are real Saints. And if their disciples love them, then their love will also not vanish. Their love will be everlasting, because the Saints continue to pull their disciples towards them with the cord of love. Such Saints are our real friends and benefactors.

Love is the Nectar of our Existence

Love is noble and pure. It purifies us and ennoble our life. It is the very essence of simplicity and purity. It is also the sustaining power of this world. Without it, the world would be desolate and our life would be aimless. Love is the sustainer of life. Without it, a man would be useless. It acts like a binding or uniting force, to keep everyone attached to each other. It induces us to work, and to be active. It stimulates our intellect and energy of mind. It is the essence of true purity. It is the spiritual light that brightens our soul. It is the straight path that takes one to the Lord. All Saints and poets sing its praises. The story of love is indescribable. Nobody can really describe it, since it can only be experienced.

Love (Prem) is Word (Naam)

God is love. God is also Naam and Shabd (Sound Current, Word). In other words, love is the Treasure of Naam and it contains that most powerful Elixir by obtaining which all our evil tendencies are destroyed.

What is the Effect of Love?

We find that an ordinary sword will cut an object into two pieces, but the sword of love is quite different. When it is used, it unites two (souls) into one. It has the same influ-

ence, whether a person is rich or poor. Love is a scale, that will weigh stones and pearls alike. It settles on kings as well as on beggars, without any distinction, because it does not discriminate between rich and poor. All are equal in the sight of love. It makes everyone restless and its effects can be seen with equal force in all conditions of life.

When a person is in love, he is in a unique state of mind. In this state, the flowers of separation bloom, cool and refreshing currents flow from sighs, and the heat produced by the sighs burns and destroys the duality in man. Whoever enters into love, will experience all the phases of love. If love did not exist and if there were no sighs caused by love, the world would be deprived of many of its sweetest stories and most touching descriptions.

Whoever goes a-hunting in the arena of love, himself becomes the victim.

Love for God bestows such uplifting power, even in the destitute, that a lover considers kings and their crowns worth no more than a straw. A lover weaves silk and velvet with the blood of his heart, and places it under the feet of his Beloved. It is only love, that can take a man into the Court of the Lord. To achieve it is the true aim of life.

If you wish to read the true story of a lover's success, look at his face. You will find the glow of love on it. By drinking the blood of life, through love, the flowers of happiness bloom. A true lover is always immersed in and saturated with the love of God. On this path of love, innumerable persons have sacrificed their worldly lives by spurning the power and pelf of the world.

The Signs of Love

The state of a person's mind is always reflected on his face. Happiness or pain, love or hatred are reflected in his expression and if he speaks, then everything in his mind comes out clearly into the open.

When a spark of love for the Lord is lit in a person's mind, it cannot be concealed. His very eyes disclose it, even

if the mouth is locked, love will burst out in the form of tears from the eyes. The body trembles, the hairs stand on end, and the lover smiles but cannot speak. Kabir says,

प्रेम छिपाया ना छिपे, जा घट परघट होय ।

जो पै मुख बोलै नहीं, तो नैन देत हैं रोय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 29, पृ० 47)

When love is awakened in the mind of a person, it keeps him happy and without worries. The currents of love constantly emanate from him.

How can one become the recipient of this wonderful gift of love for the Lord? It is impossible to obtain it, without following the instructions of a Master. It can be bestowed only on one who possesses a noble heart, and through the special Grace of God.

What are the signs by which love can be recognized? If you see a person who is miserable in his troubles and in a state of dejection, then you may know that he is devoid of love and is unfit to move in the sphere of true love. Even if the entire world should become full of thorns, the heart of a lover would remain fresh and blooming at all times, like a garden of flowers. His Beloved is always concealed in his arms, and you should never consider him to be alone.

अगर आलम हमा पुरखर बाशद, दिले-आशिक गुलो-गुलज़ार बाशद ।

वगर तनहास्त आशिक नीस्त तनहा, किहू बा माअशूक पिनहां यार बाशद ।

बयक साअत तुरा मज़िल रसानद, अगरचिहू राह नाहम्वार बाशद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 131)

Even when the entire universe is full of thorns, the heart of a lover will ever blossom into the beautiful flowers of remembrance of his Beloved. Never think him to be alone, because the Beloved is always concealed in his bosom. In the mirror of my heart is the picture of the Beloved. He can be seen at any time by simply bowing the head.

Four Things are Necessary in Love

No other idea should creep into the mind, except that of the Beloved. The question of bargaining or give and take should not arise. All types of fear should be removed. The

lover should not be in a state of enmity or hatred with anyone.

Such persons are never disappointed or lose hope. Their Beloved (Satguru) is always by their side. Bulleh Shah says,

पढाँ नमाज़ कि तै वल देखां मैनुं काबा भुल गिओई ।

-- कुल्लियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 260)

While saying my prayers, I have forgotten to look at the Ka'ba, because I do not know whether I should recite my prayers or should go on looking at You.

The prayers of a person, who depends on rituals are said in a specified posture, but the prayers of a lover are always said in a state of self-forgetfulness (rising above the mortal self or ego). A person who says his prayers according to rituals, washes his hands and his face before sitting in prayer, but a lover washes his hands of the world. In other words, so long as you do not remove your thoughts from the world, you cannot remember Him.

A lover is always happy in the remembrance of the Lord and of Satguru, who is a manifestation of God. Guru Amar Das says,

बसंतु चड़िआ फूली बनराइ ॥ एहि जीअ जंत फूलहि हरि चितु लाइ ॥

इनि बिध इहु मनु हरिआ होइ ॥

हरि हरि नामु जपै दिनु राती गुरमुखि हउमै कढै धोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत 3, पृ० 1176)

Spring has come, and the plants are flowering. The living beings blossom forth when they focus their consciousness upon the Lord. In this way, the mind is rejuvenated. Chanting the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, day and night, egotism of the Gurumukhs is removed and washed away.

He further states:

साचि रते तनि सद बसंत ॥ मनु तनु हरिआ रवि गुण गुविंद ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत 3, पृ० 1173)

Those who are imbued with Truth, are forever in the bloom of spring; their minds and bodies are rejuvenated, uttering the Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe.

The surest sign of a lover is that, if he loses any worldly or material thing it causes him no pain whatsoever; but if

time is lost without meditation, prayer or remembrance of the Beloved, it causes him immense pain.

A true lover is as fond of remembering his Lord, as a thirsty man longs for water. The tongue does not speak, but the mind is never empty, for the Beloved is always in his remembrance, and is never forgotten even for a moment. Love for the Lord and His lovers is always in his mind. He loves the ones who love Him, and also loves the entire creation.

When such lovers wish to speak about their Beloved amongst their friends, they are not able to speak, for their throats become choked.

Love is a Universal Attribute

Love is born out of human emotions. The sweet fragrance of love permeates the orchard of life. Whenever there is a current of love in the mind, the heart is spontaneously attracted by it. This current or force is working throughout the entire universe. Look at a cow, how lovingly she licks her calf. All animals and birds love each other.

With what devotion does a moth circle round a flame! A fish writhes, if it is taken out of water. How a deer is irresistibly attracted towards music, and a serpent becomes hypnotized by the sound of the flute? And how does a chakor चकोर (moon bird) gaze constantly at the full moon!

The feeling of love is universal. Animals, birds, insects, and even plants and flowers are full of it. The spark of the flame of love intoxicates a human being, who is attracted to it. The entire universe sings its praises. There is no heart, which is completely devoid of love. All are born into this world gifted with at least a particle of love. We all live on it, but those who do not follow the path rightly, are sometimes drowned in it.

Love is a Natural Quality in Man

God is love and the soul is a part of Him. The qualities of God are therefore naturally found in man. The entire

universe is being sustained by love. In other words, it is a form of love. God created the current of love in this world, and by this current, the world is kept in existence.

A human being is either attracted by the love of the universe, or is drowned in the ocean of love, which is God Himself. If there is no love, there is no existence. Wherever there is love there is life, and all the attractions of life are in existence. If there were no love, life would have no attraction for human beings.

Love is an innate quality of the heart. It is only through love, that the sublime appearance of the truth is known, because without it, man would be in anguish. A person, who has no love for anything, is not fit to be called a human being, because every human being must fix his love at one place or another.

This natural quality is inherent in the mind of every person. In some places people are engrossed in love for worldly objects. At other places, they worship abstract heavenly goals. But here and there, we also come across people who have correctly placed their love in the Lord. The love for worldly objects is temporary and transient. The love for a heavenly goal is better, but the noblest and the purest form of love is love for God.

Actually, he who possesses love in any form and has even a particle of love in him, is worthy to be called a man. This is the touchstone, by which a man may be judged. He is worthy of being called a man to the degree in which, he has the quality of love in him. If he does not possess the spark of love within him, he is very far from being called a human being.

Everything in this world is judged by the degree of its quality of love. A fire is a fire, only so long as it emits heat and light; at the same time, all that glitters is not gold. Similarly, every person cannot be called a human being in the strict sense of the term. Only those persons are human beings, who have the spark of love developed in them.

One may be a lover of physical beauty or a lover of collecting worldly objects, but by enjoying worldly loves of this kind, one does not become a human being. A true human being has a feeling of sympathy and a loving heart for mankind. Such a person forgets his own troubles and melts like wax when he sees any other person in pain or trouble. Such a person has the feeling of love and fellowship in him. Kabir says,

जा घट प्रेम न संचरै, सो घट जानु मसान ।

जैसे खाल लोहार की, साँस लेत बिन प्रान ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 11, पृ० 46)

A person in whom there is no love should be considered as a moving statue. He is like the bellows of a blacksmith, which breathes and yet has no life.

One who is humble and has love for, and surrenders himself to the Lord, has respect for all, such a one is a living ocean of the powerful currents of love. His is a cup of love, full to the brim and running over. In other words, such a person is full of good will and pleasant manners. Such a one is really noble.

The greatness of a man is not measured by the amount of his knowledge, the number of his educational degrees, or the number of books he has read. Mohammed Sahib was illiterate, but a large portion of the world still respects him. Ramakrishna Param-Hans was not conversant with book knowledge, but the whole of Bengal venerates and respects him. Guru Nanak and Kabir did not gain their education in a university, but thousands of people have a feeling of the deepest reverence for them. Their constant love for the Lord and for His creation, is responsible for their greatness. They were fully engrossed in His love.

Knowledge is a child of books, but love is the mother of books. Without love, all austerities and rituals are useless. They are beneficial only, if along with them, one has love for God and for His children. But if a person engages in austerities or rituals without developing the quality of love for the Lord and for His children, then he is like a flower without

fragrance, like a well without water, like a lamp without oil, or like eyes without sight. Such persons, even if they sometimes have a spark of spirituality in them, would prefer to keep their interest centred in worldly ties, and they flit from one object to another. The entire world is entangled in this net, and there is no possible way out.

Stages to achieve Love

It has been observed that normally, when we hear about something very good, a desire arises in our mind to obtain it. When we keep somebody's company, a connection is made with him, and our mind feels happiness in keeping that company and in seeing that person as much and as often as possible. A certain feeling is produced in connection with that person, and that feeling develops into a current of love.

Love is like a fountain of fragrance in the garden of life. When this connection with our companion becomes strong, our attachment towards him changes into love and the condition of the mind becomes such that we do not like to part company, so much so, that even if our reason tries to restrain us from meeting that person, the mind is irresistibly attracted. Then the mind rules the intellect, and as this feeling gradually increases, it becomes so strong that separation from our companion, even for a short period, makes us restless, and the mind is constantly attracted towards him and yearns to be with him. There is, however, still a slight control of the intellect over the mind, but the control is gradually reduced, and the feeling then takes the form of intense love. In that state, a lover begins to forget himself. He pays no attention to his body or his mind. He feels happy if the beloved is with him. Otherwise, he is like a dead body. He becomes indifferent to everybody, including his own kith and kin, and the entire control of the intellect vanishes.

A lover drinks from the cup of the wine of the beautiful eyes of the beloved and becomes intoxicated. He does not care for the opinion of his friends or relatives. His intellect and mind are completely devoid of the power of discrimina-

tion. Lord Krishna said that the feeling of love is so pure that, when it is produced in a person, the ego, the idea of personal gain, narrow-mindedness and the passions, all vanish.

This is the path, which a seeker has to tread, in order to come near the beloved. But it sometimes happens that the currents of love irresistibly enter into the heart of a person, as the result of just one gaze into the eyes of a true Master. Even one glance from the Master is enough to create in the seeker a feeling of intense love, without passing through the stages of association, intimate connection and emotional attraction. The *Adi Granth Sahib* says that a true Guru can achieve successful results for His disciples even by a single glance.

Four Stages of Love

Normally love is created in four steps. The attributes of a person are the result of his nature, and they result in action which creates influence. Similarly, love is of four kinds:

- That which is caused by special circumstances associated with another person. So long as this cause remains, love also remains, but it vanishes when that binding factor is removed. It is like a person, who has an electric battery device in his pocket to keep him warm. As long as the battery works, he has association with it and a kind of attachment for it; but as soon as the battery is exhausted or cut off, his attachment also vanishes. This means that he did not love the battery, but was in love with the action caused by the battery.

To give another example, a person may be a good artist or painter. Someone else may love him, because he may be able to make use of his art by getting from him a beautifully painted picture or an artistically illustrated book. His love is based on this one purpose alone, and as soon as that purpose is fulfilled, his object being attained, his love for the artist is gone. This shows that his love was of a selfish nature and was not for the painter or artist.

The average type of love in this world comes under this category, and is finished as soon as one's object or motive is fulfilled.

- Another type of love is caused by some specific action performed by another person. When that action or work is finished, love also disappears. We shall try to explain this by an example:

A man may love his wife, only for the fulfilment of his sensual desires. As soon as his desires are fulfilled or the woman becomes unfit for that purpose, his love for the woman ends and he would like to enter into a new relationship with someone else. This would mean that his love was aroused by low desires and was not for the wife at all.

Similarly, if a servant works well and obeys our orders, we love him. But when he becomes superannuated or indolent, he is turned out. When a horse is beautiful and has a good and fast trot, we love it. When it becomes weak and old, we try to get rid of it. Similarly, so long as a bullock is useful to us in our agricultural work, we love it, but as soon as it becomes old, we get rid of it. Our love is not for the servant, the horse or the bullock, but for the work they can do for us.

Someone has truly said,

काम प्यारा है, चाम नहीं।

We love the work done by people, but not the people themselves.

It is even mentioned in the Granth Sahib:

मनमुखा केरी दोसती माइआ का सनबंधु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 5, पृ० 959)

Friendship with the self-willed manmukhs (slaves of the mind) is an alliance with Maya (delusion).

- The third type of love is that which is caused by the qualities of an object or a person. As soon as the qualities are removed, the love also vanishes. One person may be a beautiful singer and may have a sweet voice. Someone else loves music, and he also loves the singer; but as soon as the voice or the sweetness of the voice is gone due to illness or some other reason, his love also goes away. Still another person may be handsome or beautiful and may be loved because of that quality. But if this quality should disappear (because of

illness, accident or old age), the love for that person would also disappear, since he was loved for that quality alone. Normally, this is the state of love in the world. People love because of superficial beauty or external show. This is not true love. Love which is produced by a certain action or due to a quality is of a primary stage, but even this is not of a high degree, because as soon as the work or action is changed or lost, the love is also lost.

- Superior to all these, is the type of love which is neither dependent on, nor created by any material circumstance, action or quality, and consequently does not vanish with them. True love remains constant. Such a love is distinguished by one sign: It comes into being spontaneously, without any external cause. This love comes from the heart with strong currents, and in it there is no motive of gain or selfishness. This is known as natural love, and once experienced it becomes a permanent feature. Such a love is superior to all other types, because it is neither dependent upon the quality or actions of its object, nor upon its transitory nature. Not only that, it does not cease even after death, because it merges into the soul. This degree of love is not found in the other types.

If a person loves another on account of some kind of circumstance or quality, the love is far from being natural or spontaneous. But if one possesses the natural love, all the other types are included in it, and all the actions, qualities and goodness inherent in the beloved are also loved and admired by the lover.

A true lover would be prepared to sacrifice himself in defence of the beauty of his beloved; he would be enraptured by the beloved's sweet voice, and any action done by the beloved would prompt him to surrender himself. He would be glad even to kiss the footprints of his beloved. It is said that wherever Laila used to go, Manu would follow and bow down at every footprint.

If one loves another without any selfish motive, he does not bother about the qualities of the beloved, and is always

prepared to disregard the qualities for the sake of love, because the qualities without the beloved have no meaning or value for him. The heart of such a person is brightened by the light of love, and the beloved appears to be the centre of all qualities and attractions to him. He loves for the sake of love alone, and is not dependent on the qualities, which are of no importance to him. He is concerned only with the person of the beloved, but not his qualities.

The foregoing is a description of the four types of worldly love. Similarly, there are various types of spiritual love. Generally, people love God, because they are attached to His creation. He is the Sustainer of the universe and looks after sinners as well as Saints. He bestows health, children and various other gifts and comforts. He is the Forgiver of all evils. If one were to love God, not for His gifts but for love alone – then such a type of love would be very high.

Another type of love for God is of a constant or permanent nature, because God Himself is permanent and His influence, qualities and actions or energies are naturally unchangeable. But the true and real type of love for Him is that, by which the heart is attracted towards Him without any selfish motives. Such a love is produced in the mind of a person, who is without any desires. Without any apparent reason the attraction is there. It is beyond description, and even if we were to try to describe it, the description would be incomplete. In fact, it is not possible to describe this lofty type of love within the limitations of worldly words or ideas.

If you were to ask what is true love for God, and what is the way, by which one can be attracted towards Him, it would be difficult to give the answer in mortal language. The flow of tears from the eyes does not reveal the depth of love. The lover's feeling of restlessness is no indication of the intensity of his love. But if one were to follow the path of love for the Lord, the soul would then perceive a spark of that flame of this love. But the influence that this love exerts in man cannot be described by intellect.

All Saints love God for His sake only. Their love is very different from the love of ordinary people. When conditions are favourable and one is placed in comforts of life, then it is easy to love God. But the Saints do not waver in their love for Him, even when they are deprived of comfortable circumstances. They sacrifice their body, mind, wealth and even their lives for the sake of love for the Lord.

Actually, love is not true love if it varies with changes in conditions, or vanishes in the face of adversities. True love is everlasting. It cannot be destroyed even by tempests of hardships.

Such love is a guiding star for the world and its ignorant people. It cannot be valued in terms of money, but one may nevertheless be able to perceive its greatness and superiority over the ordinary type.

Love is not love, that alters when it alteration finds, or bend with the remover to remove. It is an ever fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken. It is the star to every wandering bark, whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. (William Shakespeare)

A lover swims happily in the deep sea of God's love, like a fish in the water. A fish cannot live without water. The intensity of a true lover's love for the Lord is of such a nature that it is in every cell and vein of his body – from head to foot. He is always deeply immersed in his love for God, which is for the sake of God alone, and is free from the filth of all selfish desires.

The Wine of Love

Hafiz describes the intoxication of true love in the following words:

मरा दर रिश्ताए—दीवानगां कश, किह् मस्ती खुश्तर अस्त अज होशियारी ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 387)

O Master, take me into the circle of your lovers, for this madness of love for you is far better than the cleverness of the outside world.

अक्ल अगर दानद किह् दिल दर बंदे—जुल्फ़श चूं खुश अस्त,

आक़िलां दीवाना गरदंद अज पए जंजीरे—मा ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 34)

The lives of thousands of intellectual persons are not worth a moment of this madness. If the senses were to know how much bliss is in store for the heart that achieves this state of madness, then people now following the lure of the senses would become mad after this Divine Love.

Again, he says,

हंगामे—तंगदस्ती दर ऐश कोशो—मस्ती,
की कीमीयाए—हस्ती कारू कुनद गदा रा ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 33)

If you are poor, but have directed the currents of your mind into the intoxication of true love, you will find it to be so powerful an elixir that it makes even poor people as rich as King Haroon. This is the best prescription for making a king, even of a beggar.

बर दरे—मैखाना रपतन कारे—यक—दगां बुवद,
खुद—फिरोशां रा बकूए—मै—फिरोशां राह नीस्त ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 81)

The wine shop where this intoxication of love can be obtained may be approached only by those who have but one motive in their minds; whose hearts, minds and even tongues are completely dyed in the hue of their Beloved. It is not possible for selfish persons or worldly people to enter the lane leading to the reservoir of the wine of love for the Lord.

In the above, Hafiz does not refer to the material wine, but to the spiritual intoxicant of love for the Lord. It has no material ingredients and has been in existence from the very beginning of time. Prem (love) cannot be described by human tongue. Hafiz says,

सुखने इश्क न आनस्त किह आयद बज़बां,
साकीया मै दिह ओ कोताह कुन ई गुप्तो—शनीद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़

O my Master, bestow on me this intoxication of love as soon as possible, without entangling me in the web of outward discussions.

Shams-i-Tabrez describes this wine of love in the following words:

साकी जि शराबे—हक्क बरदार शराबे रा,
 दर दिह मए—रब्बानी दिलहाए कबाबे रा।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 15)

This wine is the wine of spirituality. O ye distributor, bring this wine of God and give it to those who have been writhing in the anguish of separation from the Lord.

The Intoxication of the Wine of Love

The worldly wine cannot be compared even to one sip of the wine of true love, for this love is the elixir of life and the soul. There is no comparison between that Divine Elixir and worldly wine. Hafiz says,

दो हजार खुमे—बादा नरसद ब—जुरा तू
 जि कुजा शराबे—खाकी जि कुजा शराबे—जानी।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 413)

Even two thousand jugs of this wine cannot equal one drop of the wine of love for my Master.

Guru Nanak was offered bhang (a narcotic) by King Babar, but He said:

भउ की भांग सिफत का कूंडा गिआन का कीआ डंडा।
 सच सबद अमृत मथ पीआ तब हूआ अमल अखंडा।।
 बाबर कलंदर पिआला पीओ।। उतर न जावै कबहू खीओ।।

-- जन्म साखी, गुरु नानक, भाई बाला (पृ० 401)

O King, the intoxication of this narcotic, if taken in the morning, will vanish by evening; or if taken in the evening, it will disappear by morning, but the intoxication of love for the Lord continues day and night, and it never fails.

Maulana Rumi says,

बइश्के—ऊ शवद दुनिया—ओ—दीन मस्त,
 अगर मस्ताना आवाज़े बरआरम।
 दस्तूर नीस्त जां रा किह बिगोयद ई बयां रा,
 वरना जि कुफ़ रुस्ते हर किह काफ़िर आमद।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 136)

I am so intoxicated by love that the entire world would be intoxicated by it, if I were to shout in my state of ecstasy.

He further says,

जि खाके—मन अगर गंदम बर आयद, अजू गर पुजी मस्ती फ़जायद ।
शवद दीवाना साजिंदा पुजिंदा, तनूरश बैते—मस्ताना सरायद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 129)

There is such an abundance of love – intoxication in me that a bread prepared from the wheat grown on a field, fertilized by my body would intoxicate the bread-maker with the love of God. But I cannot describe the state of the person who would eat that bread. Even the person who sets the table for such a bread would become intoxicated, and the oven in which the bread was baked would dance with ecstasy from this intoxication.

Where can we get the Elixir of Love?

This wine of love cannot be found in jugs. It is flowing out of the hearts of lovers. Persons who have not tasted the elixir of love are aimlessly running after the intricacies of worldly attractions and are deprived of this Divine Ecstasy.

What is the Principle of Obtaining Love?

Just as there are regulations and principles laid down for obtaining different types of knowledge, in the same manner there is a definite code of discipline to be followed for admission to the school of love. It is necessary that these principles be followed rigidly: A lover must give up the thoughts of the world, the attractions thereof and of the world beyond, and must then be completely absorbed in contemplation of his Beloved at all times.

Love for the Master and its Benefits

We have not seen the Lord, and we do not know how to love Him. But a Master is the manifestation of His love, and to love the Master is to love the Lord. To love one's Master is to lose one's own identity completely in the Master and thereby merge into the Lord.

It is easy to boast about one's love for the Master, but it is extremely difficult to be a true lover. A disciple should

gradually increase his love for the Master. As a result, that love will eventually turn into true ecstasy and His Form will then imprint itself in the mind of the disciple. Without Dhyan ध्यान (contemplation on the form of the Master) it is not possible to strengthen the bond of love for the Master, nor will the Dhyan be complete; that is, it will not be possible for the disciple to hold the form of the Master within himself.

The attitude of the disciple towards his Master and God should be like that of a moth for the flame, and he should burn in the fire of his love for Him, because by such an immolation one does not die but attains everlasting life. The lovers that forget themselves completely in love for their Master, drink from the fountain of the Elixir of Life and attain eternal bliss.

We love saintly persons because they are merged in His love. To meet them and to be in their presence is to meet God and to be in His presence. Jesus Christ says,

He who has seen me has seen my father.

Once God said to Moses,

I was not well, and how is it that you did not come to inquire about my health?

Moses replied,

O God, you are the king of this world and of the regions above. How can you fall ill?

The reply was:

Moses, a certain very dear devotee of mine was not well and you did not go to him to inquire about his health. If you had visited him at that time, you would have automatically visited me.

This clearly shows that love and service to the devotees of the Lord is love and service to the Lord Himself. Similarly, love and service to the Master and contemplation of His form is, in reality, love and contemplation of God. But people in their ignorance call it idol worship, man worship, or gurudom (guru worship).

सतिगुरु देउ परतखि हरि मूरति जो अमृत बचन सुणावै॥

नानक भाग भले तिसु जन के जो हरि चरणी चितु लावै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 4, पृ० 1264)

The Divine True Guru is the the Image, the Embodiment of the Lord. He utters the Ambrosial Word. O Nanak, blessed is the destiny of that humble being, who focuses his consciousness on the Feet of the Lord.

Nearness to God is achieved and felt in two different ways: outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly, it is done by keeping the company of Saints, but inwardly one cannot attain it, unless heart is connected with heart. And to create the path of contact from one heart to the other, it is necessary to inculcate in one's self the highest form of love. When love and affection are firmly established in one's heart, then contemplation of the Beloved is easily achieved, because in the hearts of lovers the form of their Beloved is always present.

दिल के आईने में है तस्वीरे—यार, जब ज़रा गर्दन झुकाई देख ली।

-- मुंशी मौजी राम 'मौजी'

In the mirror of the heart, there is the image of the Beloved. By simply bowing the head, one can see it.

In the Muslim Scriptures it is said that a Gurumukh गुरुमुख is the mirror of God. God gives us a glimpse of Himself through His Gurumukhs, and to enable us to see Him, the Gurumukhs act as mirrors (of God). By seeing such persons, we remember Him, and the sign by which we recognize such Gurumukhs is that, by keeping their company and by meeting them, we are automatically reminded of the existence of God. When this does not happen, we should take it that the individual is not a complete Gurumukh. Kabir says,

कबीर दरसन साध के, साहिब आवैं याद।

लेखे में सोई घड़ी, बाकी के दिन बाद।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साध का अंग 34, पृ० 127)

O Kabir, by the Darshan of (by seeing) a Saint I remember my God, and every such moment is credited towards the remembrance of the Lord. All other time is wasted.

One should not keep the company of a person who is devoid of truth, faith and love, because he is like a mirror and we shall see our own reflection and that of our own thought currents in him. When a devotee has firmly established the condition of love and affection within himself,

his heart is then connected with the heart of his Master by the chord of love. This can be achieved only by inculcating intense love and practicing contemplation and remembrance. Hearts that are devoid of these qualities cannot achieve true love. Therefore, lovers of God remember Him by repetition of His Name and contemplation on the form of their Master. They are then able to benefit by contemplation, outwardly as well as inwardly.

A Master is a lover of God; in Him there are boundless currents of true love. He is the physical form of that love. To love Him is to find the most important medium for developing love for God, because He is a manifestation of God, and His heart is full of love for Him. His face shines with the light and energy of God. By seeing Him, love and longing for God increases. To love such a person, is to love God Himself, because by loving Him we always remember our Lord.

Maulana Rumi says,

चूं किह् करदी जाते—मुर्शिद रा कबूल,
हम खुदा दर जातश आमद हम रसूल ।

-- कितबुल-बैअत (पृ० 8)

When you have accepted the personality of your Master, then God and His manifestation on earth are also automatically accepted.

गर जुदा बीनी जि हक्क ई ख्वाजा रा,
गुम कुनी हम मतन ओ हम दीबाजा रा ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 6, पृ० 309)

If you look at your Master as a different entity from God, you will lose the reality of God also.

गर बजूई जाते—हक्क रा सूरते—मुर्शिद बबीं,
आशिके शौ जाते—हक्क रा अंदर रोशन जबीं ।

-- मौलाना रूमी

If you are searching for the reality of God, look at the face of your Master, and by looking at God through the lustre of the Master's forehead, you will fall in love with Him.

A person, in whose heart love for the Master has been bestowed by God, is really fortunate, because love for the

Master is the method by which we come to love God. To love the Satguru only for his own sake, is better than any other type of love, because the inner beauty in Him is indestructible. God's beauty is everlasting, and He shines through a Satguru; therefore, love for the Master is free from all defects. But one must remember that in order to love God or the Master, it is necessary to create true longing.

As long as a person is absorbed in enjoyment of the sensual pleasure, real longing (for God) will not come. We must consequently keep away from bad company and also save ourselves from the snare of sensual pleasures. The soul is a particle of its origin, which is the Lord, and it has descended from the highest spiritual regions. It is, therefore, not a good thing to entangle it in sensual and worldly pleasures.

By loving the Master, we inculcate love for the Lord within ourselves, and a desire is created in us to meet Him. This creates a sense for contentment within, and at the same time, the mind is controlled by keeping it busy in repeating His Names.

With the increase of love for the Master, love for the Lord automatically increases, and one is always inclined to remember Him intensely. By repetition of His Divine Names one becomes calm, and without this one is restless.

After some time, the disciple's condition becomes one of love and there is an intense desire of the heart for the Lord. By remembering the Master, who is the manifestation of the Lord, the disciple begins to long for His Darshan; tears automatically roll down his eyes, and the soul becomes restless. The restlessness of the soul makes him forget himself. The repetition of the Names becomes so intense, that the disciple becomes completely absorbed in it and forgets his own self. Guru Ram Das says,

राम गुरि मोहनि मोहि मनु लईआ ॥

हउ आकल बिकल भई गुर देखे हउ लोट पोट होइ पईआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 836)

My Master, who is God incarnate, has captured my heart, and I am restless to have His Darshan.

This state cannot be described in words, because such a person is full of the ecstasy, created by the elixir of love and is awakened into a state of super-consciousness (bliss). Those who are devoid of love for the Master, cannot understand this condition. In the fire of love, everything in the mind of the lover is annihilated; and because it is not possible for him to bear that state of separation (from God) and restlessness, he cries out to the world,

कोठे ते चढ़ देवां होका । इश्क़ विहाझो कोई न लोका ।

-- कुलियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 209)

I call out from the roof-top: O people! Please do not fall in love.

जे मैं ऐसा जाणती रे, प्रीत किये दुख होय,

नगर ढँढ़ोरा फेरती रे, प्रीत करो मत कोय ।

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 3)

Had I known that love results in such an affliction, I would have announced to the world with the beating of drums that nobody should love.

Only one, whose mind and body are engulfed in the ocean of love, can know the condition of love. No other person can do so. A lover is beside himself, because of his intense longing, and people call him mad. But having tasted this unique love, he is so happy in it that he cares nothing for the world and passes his time in a state of constant love for the Lord. Bulleh Shah described this state of a lover in the following beautiful words:

इश्क़ असां नाल केही कीती लोक मरेंदे ताने ।।

दिल दी वेदन कोई न जाणे अंदर देस बिगाने ।

जिस नूं चाट अमर दी होवे सोई अमर पछाने ।

एस इश्क़ दी अउखी घाटी जो चढ़िआ सो जाने ।

इश्क़ असां नाल केही कीती लोक मरेंदे ताने ।।

आतश इश्क़ फ़राक़ तेरे दी पल विच साड़ विखाइआ ।

एस इश्क़ ने साडे कोलों जग विच दिआं दुहादआं ।

जिस तन लगे सो तन जाणे दूजा कोई न जाने ।

इश्क़ असां नाल केही कीती लोक मरेंदे ताने ।।

इश्क़ कसाई ने जेही कीती रह गई ख़बर न काई ।
 इश्क़ चुआती लाई छाती फेर न ज्ञाती पाई ।
 मापिआं कोलों छुप छुप रोवां कर कर लख बहाने ।
 इश्क़ असां नाल केही कीती लोक मरेंदे ताने ।।
 हिजर तेरे नें झल्ली करके कमली नाम धराइआ ।
 सुमुन बुकमन उमीउन होके अपना वक़्त लंघाइआ ।
 कर हुन नज़र करम दी साइओ ना कर ज़ोर धिगाने ।
 इश्क़ असां नाल केही कीती लोक मरेंदे ताने ।।

-- कुल्लियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 161-62)

Why have I have loved my Beloved; people taunt me on all sides.

Nobody understands the condition of my heart, because I feel that I am in a strange atmosphere.

Only he who has a longing for the indestructible Lord can comprehend Him.

It is difficult to ascend to the summit of love; He alone knows who has done so.

Why have I have loved my Beloved; people taunt me on all sides.

The fire of your love has consumed me in a moment, and this love has made me announce to the world:

Whoever is consumed by the fire of love is the only one who can comprehend it; no one else knows it.

Why have I have loved my Beloved; people taunt me on all sides.

This butcher of love has been so unkind to me that I cannot describe it.

Having pierced through my breast, it vanished.

I cry stealthily to my parents by making every kind of pretensions.

Why have I have loved my Beloved; people taunt me on all sides.

Because of separation from Thee, people call me mad, and I am spending my time in quietness, shutting my eyes and closing my ears.

O my Lord, please look upon me with Thy Divine Glance and be Merciful to this wretched creature of Thine!

Why have I have loved my Beloved; people taunt me on all sides.

When one who has real love for the Master, is in the Master's presence, his condition is unique, and due to the burning of the fire of love caused by the Master's Darshan (sight of the Master) he appears to be an entirely different person.

By looking at the Master, the remembrance of the Lord automatically comes into one's mind, and by being absorbed into it, the soul soars into the higher regions and is in a state of indescribable bliss.

Thus the two souls – the soul of the Master and that of the disciple – unite; both become one. The soul of the disciple enters into the soul of overflowing love of the Satguru, and merges completely into the form of his Master, thereby attaining the state of the consummation of love or complete union in Him. The disciple is dyed in the hue of the Master's love and imbibes all His qualities. As the Master's qualities are far superior to anything imaginable, the disciple gains tremendous benefit.

This state of love is so ecstatic that Mohammedan Saints have compared it to the state of intoxication, caused by drinking wine. But the state of bliss is indescribable, and can be known only by the devotee, who has surrendered himself completely to his Satguru. In such a state, the Master guides the devotee with Grace under all conditions. People who are engrossed in the sensual pleasures of this world, cannot realize this.

In order to invoke love and Grace from the Lord, it is necessary for the devotee to enrich love for his Master and to seek Grace from Him.

One person may claim to love God. Another loves his Master. Which one of these two is nearer to God? Without love for the Master, it is not possible to love God, because God is invisible. So the person who claims to love God loves Him only superficially. God is visible only through His manifestations (the Masters); therefore, to love the Master is to love God. If you desire to love God, you should keep the company of His lovers.

The currents of God's love will then enter into your heart and make you a lover of God. The love for God increases in proportion to the increase of love for the Master, and the devotee begins to see Light inside.

Sometimes the Light is in the form of lightning, sometimes stars are seen, and sometimes the stars burst and the sun and moon are visible. Sometimes the luminous and brilliant form of the Master is visible within, and this enables the soul to see higher spiritual regions within, and to cross Brahm and Paar Brahm.

The Master forbids the devotee to reveal these secrets to others, because it is against the law of God and of Nature to do so. By the Grace of the Master, these internal sights increase in number and intensity day by day; and by contemplation on the form of the Master, the devotee's love for God is also gradually intensified, thus increasing his state of happiness into one of unalloyed bliss. Such a devotee is really fortunate, and after he has reached this state, if the Master shows indifference, then his life becomes miserable and is worse than suffering from hundreds of ailments.

Kabir says,

हरि रूटे गुरु ठौर है, गुरु रूटे नहिं ठौर।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (गुरुदेव का अंग 33, पृ० 4)

It causes no pain or anguish if God is displeased with a true devotee, because he has the support of his Master, but if the Master is displeased with him, then he has no place to go in this world or beyond.

A Master possesses the unique magnetic power of love, which draws a devotee towards Him and creates within him a feeling of indifference towards worldly attractions. This magnetic power is an inherent quality of the Master and emanates from His every action and movement. Everything that radiates from the Master – the light of His beautiful face, the lines on His forehead, even his indifference when he is displeased with the devotee, the lustre round Him when He speaks smilingly – all pierce the heart of the devotee and thus attract him

to his Master. Through the lustre of the Master's face, shines the lustre of God, and one sees God in his Master.

Hafiz says,

बदम गुप्ती ओ खुरसंदम अफाफ अल्लाह निकू गुप्ती,
जवाबे-तल्ख मी जीबद लबे-लअले-शकर खारा।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 31)

Even harsh words coming from the beautiful red lips of the Master are full of love.

This state of love is achieved by those lovers, who have fully forgotten themselves and have merged themselves entirely into the Beloved. But in order to attain this condition, one has to cross various stages.

Sometimes the Master appears indifferent, and by other similar signs tries to eliminate ego and arrogance from the mind of His devotee. Sometimes the Master's love for the disciple is apparent and He thereby strengthens the love in the disciple, as a result of which the soul rises higher.

Sometimes true lovers of the Master feel their life to be miserable and have an intense longing to meet Him, and in their state of separation from Him, they consider every breath to be as long as a year. To them, this world is a place of horror, day and night. This state of unbearable pain cannot be described, and if one were to listen to an attempt at describing it, he would tremble. O God, may such a state never be the fate of any person!

Love God and His Lovers

Everyone wishes to be loved by someone, and also desires to love someone. Everyone says,

I want to love someone and I also want someone to love me, so that I may be useful to him and he may be of help to me.

This type of love is also prevalent amongst animals. But it is necessary to understand what type of love one should have, and with whom one should create ties of love so that it may be beneficial.

Everybody knows that love for this world and worldly people and objects is the cause of many miseries, because

these things are all temporary and will leave us sooner or later. We shall leave them at our death. Therefore, we should give our love to a being, who is beyond death and who will never be separated from us, so that we may never feel the pain of separation.

Such a being is none other than God Himself, or His manifestation, whose soul is completely merged in God and who has everlasting life. Therefore, it is God in the form of His Saints who are worthy of our love. God is within each one of us, and consequently He, unlike worldly objects, cannot be separated from us. To love Him will never cause any pain. Therefore, it is only God or His Saints, with whom one can be in love constantly till eternity. So, if you wish to love and be loved at all times, then your love should be offered to God Himself through His manifestation on this earth, who is no other than the Satguru.

The highest and the greatest boon that anyone can have is the love for God; but only those, on whom God bestows His Grace, can be the recipient of this sublime gift. In order to create love for God in one's heart, it is necessary to create love for the Master. If we love God, He loves us. Maulana Rumi says,

दर दिलत चूं मिहरे—मुर्शिद शुद अयां, हस्त परतव मिहरे—हक्क रा बेगुमां ।
If love for the Master is in your heart, then rest assured that God also loves you, because the Master is the reflection of God on earth.

Another Saint, Bu-Ali Qalandar says,

नीस्ती आगाह अज़ लुत्फे—खुदा, हमचू आशिक हर ज़मां बीनद तुरा ।

-- मसनवी बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (पृ० 40)

You cannot fathom the Grace of God. His glance of love is on you at all times, like that of a lover for the beloved.

In the Quran it is also stated:

I remember those, who remember me.

It is extremely difficult to describe true love for God. Some people say that it is impossible to love God, and that love for God simply means that we should follow His commandments. Such people are ignorant of the real Truth.

Hazrat Mohammed says,
None amongst you is a Gurumukh (true devotee of the Master). So long as you do not have greater love for me than for your parents, children and all other worldly objects, you cannot be a Gurumukh.

He then prays:

O my God, bestow upon me love for you and the love of those eings of yours who love you. Instil in me a longing that will bring me nearer to your love; and create in me a desire for love for you as intense as that which a person dying of thirst has for a drink of cold water – in truth, even more intense than that.

How can people, who are submerged in worldly attachments, know anything about God's love? So long as they are not free from worldly attachments, it will not be possible for them to taste God's love. They cannot understand the valuable words of Hazrat Mohammed:

I am devoted to my God much more than to highly scented perfumes and even to beautiful women.

Praises of Love by various Saints

God is love. Just as it is impossible to praise Him adequately, it is similarly not possible to define love. Those, who have drunk deeply out of the cup of love, have become intoxicated by it, and in their ecstasy have sung songs of praise for Him. Below are given a few quotations by way of example:

Love is God; it is the religion and faith of man.

Love is a pilgrimage; it is a magnetic power which attracts the hearts and everything good and beautiful in them.

A heart full of love is contented and sweet.

Love is the comforter and sustainer of hearts; it is the hope, the longing for union, and surging emotion in the heart.

It is a Power. When we love, we learn the lesson of courage and fearlessness.

It is the shield against which no weapon can be effective.

It is Truth and Reality. It is faith and sacrifice.

It is a divine flower, which imparts its perfume to the entire universe. It is a fragrant flower through which man's life is beautified.

It is a light by which the universe is illuminated.

It is a source of perfume which wafts spring-like fragrance into the hearts of men.

It is a story which will never end, and a problem for which there is no solution.

It is a silent emotion full of sweetness, in which man forgets himself completely.

It is a heavenly gift and good for the soul.

It is the nightingale, whose sweet songs have a magic effect on man.

It is the permanent union. Both, the lover and the beloved are imperishable. It is an indescribable state of their hearts.

It is a rare gem, and a man's heart is its mounting.

It is a priceless jewel, which is within us at all times but is not obtainable (without guidance.)

It is as brittle as glass but as strong as steel.

It is a current of purity and a rare gift of God, bestowed on each one of us.

Love is the greatness as well as the purity of the heart.

To love is the real aim of man and the most needed ingredient of his life. The arrows of love are silent. God does not wish for anything but love for His creation.

Love is such a potent elixir that even one drop of it will awaken the dormant energies in man.

Love is the purest and the greatest benefactor of life.

Love is an unfailing medicine which sustains the heart and brings new life into it.

The key to heaven is love and not intellect.

Those who are devoid of love are also devoid of God, for God is love.

There are waves of unselfishness in the ocean of love, which can be seen and felt but are beyond description.

Love is not artificial. It is natural.

Love is not lifeless. It is life and full of activity.

Love is not blind. It increases vision.

Love is not a malady. It is the proof of spiritual awakening.

Love is the best means of seeking freedom from worldly worries.

Love is stable, imperishable and infinite. In the end all one's ties and connections with the world are broken, but it is impossible for the relationship of love to be destroyed. It is stronger than

chains of steel and unbreakable even by death. Because it is a part of the soul, even when the two bodies perish, its impression remains in the two hearts.

What is love? Two souls with but one thought, two hearts with but one tongue.

The Treasure of Love is Rare

In this world, there are innumerable treasures. We are well versed in knowledge and philosophy, but the state of being in love with the Beloved, expressed by painful sighs and tears because of separation from Him at night, is the lot of a rare few. Hafiz says,

खजीनहास्त मरा पुर जि नक्दे-इल्मो-अदब,
कुजास्त आहे-सहरगाहो-नालाए-अव्वल-शब ।

-- दीवाने-गरीब जवाज़ (पृ० 30)

I have innumerable treasures of knowledge and of intellect but, alas, I cannot write the story of the tears shed in separation at night, nor of the sighs of longing for my Beloved.

Manifest and Unmanifest

God is infinite. He has no form nor name. He is free from all limitations and qualities. But we have a physical form, and a lover's heart naturally prays that his Beloved should also similarly appear before his eyes, so that he may behold Him. The lover's eyes long to see Him, his hands long to touch Him, his ears long to hear His sweet voice, and he wishes to embrace his Beloved. He desires to express his love, and therefore he wants to clothe the spiritual with a material form.

When we cover the spirit with material raiment and worship it, we call it material love. The Persian poets have named it physical worship. Hindus worship it as Sagun सगुण (spirit with qualities). But the worship of Nirgun निर्गुण (spirit without qualities) is known as spiritual worship. In different Scriptures it is called the worship of God, the worship of the Ka'ba, and so forth. The object of physical and spiritual worship is the same. People who perform spiritual worship

have to go to the Ka'ba or to Dehr and bow their heads in worship there. The radiance of the same God, who is in the Ka'ba is in a Saint. The only difference is in the conception of the devotee.

Spiritual Love and Physical Love

Love is of two kinds. One is physical and man-made, and the other is natural or divine. Physical love is the love of worldly people who are continually tied to the world and its objects. Divine Love is that of the devotee of the Lord, and it establishes a permanent connection with God.

The satisfaction of sensual desires is not a man's goal in life. These pleasures, besides pulling him down, have no permanence in them whatsoever. The real object of life is to connect the soul with the unchangeable Lord and thus be united with Him forever in eternal bliss.

Some people dislike the physical type of love, while others call it the first step towards spiritual love. There is a downward tendency in the expression of physical love, by which the lower senses are excited. In spiritual love, the senses are all under perfect control.

The expression of love that is produced as a result of physical attraction is not the true form of love. Rather, it is the cause of one's fall in the eyes of God. Extremely rare is the case of a person, who can attain spiritual love through physical love.

Some of the Muslim Saints, however, considered it necessary to attain spiritual love through physical love. They considered physical love as the first step towards spiritual love. Their contention was that just as a staircase or a ladder is necessary in order to ascend a high wall, similarly, to ascend the heights of spiritual love, one had first to experience the ladder of physical love. But this is necessary only for gaining concentration through contemplation.

Once such concentration has been achieved, one should immediately try to develop only spiritual love, because the other method is beset with risks and obstacles.

Those who attempt to ascend to spiritual love by means of physical love, usually remain at a standstill in the condition of physical love, which is nothing but an animal instinct. They cannot make spiritual progress.

Maulana Rumi says,

इश्क़हाए किह पए बुवद, इश्क़ नबुवद आकिबत नंगे बुवद ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 1, पृ० 52)

The physical love is like a bridge, and a bridge is meant only to cross the river and not to live on. Those who stay on the bridge do not achieve any progress in their endeavour to meet the Lord.

Saint Bernard says,

Love begins in the flesh and ends in the spirit.

The outer love should never be considered more than the first step towards the Divine Love. Both types of love are good, provided there is no motive of gratification of the senses. Love should be for the sake of love alone. The foundation of true love contains no trace of selfish aims or desires. Like God's love for us, our love should also be expressed and offered to Him, without any selfish motive or desire for reward.

Selfish love is called attachment, and is merely a physical emotion. When love is imprisoned within the limitations of low, narrow and selfish qualities, the result is pain and misery. This selfish love is advocated by some lecturers and leaders, who have only their own personal gain in view. Their lectures do not deal with the real love, which is for God and His entire creation – whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian, and of any caste, creed or nationality.

Look at the state of adoration and self-abnegation of Majnu! He ran after his beloved Laila like a madman. Even if he saw her footprint, he would consider it a sin to pass by it without first bending his forehead to touch the footprint with it in homage. It is written that once he was seen kissing the feet of a dog, and when asked the reason why, he said:

This dog sometimes walks in the vicinity of Laila's residence.

Majnu's love for Laila was so deeply imbedded in his heart, that he had no room for anything else. Majnu, however, remained at a standstill in physical love for Laila. Love for the physical form (which itself is not eternal) is only the play of lustful desires. Worldly love is usually of this nature. The only lasting and true love is for God, and is not confined to worldly forms. Worldly love keeps one away from Him.

After Laila's death, Majnu realized the truth. He said that his mad love for Laila caused him to feel ashamed. He regretted having showered all his love on a mortal being, for he then realized that the best friend is the one with whom we can be united forever.

Give your heart to the Being, who is eternal. Why attach yourself to one, who is subject to death and decay?

Saints have therefore taught us to avoid the expression of physical love and have directed us to love our Satguru instead of loving worldly forms, for the Masters are free from all worldly dross, and love for them will not entangle us in the ties of this world. And love for the Master is necessary, because His love reminds us of God. Such a state has been described by the Saints as merging oneself into the Satguru. As the Satguru Himself is merged in the Lord, one who merges himself into the Satguru automatically achieves the next step, which is to merge oneself into the Lord. Thus one attains God-realization.

A love that is produced as the result of action, qualities or personal influence is all worldly love. True love is a living force.

Shams-i-Tabrez says,

ता कै कनार गीरी माअशूके—मुर्दा रा,
जां रा कनार गीर किह ऊ रा कनार नीस्त ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 54)

How long will you keep the dead Beloved in your embrace? Why not take hold of the soul, for it will never die!

The true lover and the Beloved exist forever. You should not give your heart to flesh and bones, for they are perishable

and will one day decay. To give one's heart to a destructible thing is to kill oneself. The physical type of love only succeeds in confusing the lover, moves him farther away from divinity, and prevents him from crossing the ocean of death.

Therefore, turn your mind away from the worldly love for your children, for your wife, for your wealth and treasures, for your sovereignty and fame. These are all ephemeral. Instead, we should turn our faces toward the Lord through His manifestation on earth, the Satguru.

Muslim Scriptures state that,

व मन मातल्इश्कु फ़क़द मात शहीद ।

अद्दुनिया जीफ़तुन व तालिबुहा किलाब ।

To die in love for the Lord is the real sacrifice. This means that whoever has died in such love, has died a real death. The world is a dead thing and those who hanker after it, are no better than dogs.

Since this world is transitory and man is at the top of creation, it is improper for a human being to stoop to the worldly type of love.

There is no contentment in worldly love, whereas in love for God there is complete tranquillity. Hafiz says,

आशिक किह् शुद किह् यार बहालश नज़र न करद,

ऐ ख़ाजा दर्द नीस्त वगरना तबीब हस्त ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 78)

What is the use of giving your love to a person, who does not respond? The fault lies in the fact that there is not enough intensity of longing, although the healer of this pain of longing is always there.

We should learn the lesson of sacrifice from the moth, which never wavers, even though it is burnt to death by the flame by which it is attracted. Again, Hafiz says,

हाफ़िज़ सबर बाश किह् दर राहे-आशिकी,

हर कस किह् जां नदाद बजानां नमी रसद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 192)

It is certain that so long as one is not prepared to sacrifice his life on the path of love, he cannot reach the Beloved.

Means of creating Worldly Love and Spiritual Love

Whenever we have a desire to express our love for someone, we should try to discover what kind of love the beloved would prefer. We should then inculcate in ourselves those qualities or actions by which the beloved is pleased and we should always talk about those things only, for by listening to them he will naturally be attracted.

Love is not created by sight alone. It is also awakened by constantly listening to speech or song about the beloved, and by talking about him. When you are able to develop the qualities that are liked by the beloved and he is satisfied that you have actually developed them, he will then automatically bestow his love on you. Take an example.

If you are interested in painting and have mastered the art, then as soon as a lover of art sees your proficiency or hears about it, you will naturally become the object of his interest or love.

Someone else may be fond of music or may be interested in poetry, and you may study music or poetry and attain proficiency in it. Then, whenever that person listens to your music or poetry, he will be automatically attracted towards you.

We have many such examples in nature. When one is attracted by a certain quality or action, the lover should also develop the same kind of quality or type of action, in order to become eligible for the love of the beloved.

The above methods are the means for the development of worldly love. But if such a love is developed with the object of satisfying one's own sensual desires or is subject to any other ulterior motive, it becomes the cause of attachment and must be shunned. If one indulges in this type of love, he loses his own good qualities and retards his progress towards the real love.

On the other hand, if this worldly love is not covered with the filth of sensual pleasure nor motivated by some selfish aim, then the true love, which is pure and divine, will ultimately be developed. Maulana Jami says,

गुनीमत दां अगर इश्क मजाजी अस्त,
किह अज बहरे-हकीकी कार साजी अस्त।

If you have physical love, which is not subject to any selfish or ulterior motive, then such a love is welcome, because it is the means of creating in you, love for God.

Sufi Saints have also described physical or worldly love as the first step towards spiritual love. They say:

मबादा हेच दिल बे-इश्क बाजी, अगर बाशद हकीकी या मजाजी।

मजाजि आईना दारे-रूप मअना अस्त, सरे-ई जलवा हम दर कूप मअना अस्त।

Love, whether it is material or spiritual, should be in every heart, because in the mirror of material love there is the reflection of spiritual love. The light of worldly love illuminates the path of Love Divine.

Everybody, whether consciously or unconsciously, is in search of a beloved. And every place is suited for love, whether it is a mosque, a temple or a church. This universal search for a beloved is a reflection of the Divine Love.

True and False Love

Hafiz says,

इश्क आं नीस्त किह बर शुअला-ए-ऊ खंदद शमअ,
आतिश आं अस्त किह बर खिरमने-परवाना जदंद।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज

True love is like a bright light, in which a moth will sacrifice itself in a moment. It is not feeble like that of the weak glow of a candle, of which the light itself will feel ashamed.

Again:

ऐ मुर्गे-सहर इश्क जि परवाना बयामूज,
क-आं सोख्ता रा जां शुद ओ आवाज नयामद।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज

O harken ye, loud-crowing cock! Why such a din? You should have taken a lesson of love from the moth, who burns to death without even a sigh.

Life is Useless Without Divine Love

Of what use is the drinking of nectar to one, who has not tasted the unique elixir of true love! Of what use is life

for one, who has not sacrificed himself on the path of love! Of what use is the reading of scriptures or even the reciting of them, if one has not understood their meaning! Such a one is only superficially calling the Beloved by the names of love, and has not created true love for Him within himself. Of what use is it to weep outwardly, if one has not shed silent tears for the Beloved within!

जिस प्रेम रस चाखा नहीं, अमृत पिया तो क्या हुआ,
जिस इश्क़ पर सिर ना दिया, जुग जुग जिया तो क्या हुआ!
देखी गुलिस्ताँ बोस्ताँ, मतलब न पाया शेख़ का,
सारी किताबें याद कर, हाफ़िज़ हुआ तो क्या हुआ!
वली पुकारे पिया पिया, पिया कहे जिया दिया,
मतलूब हासल न हुआ, रो रो मुआ तो क्या हुआ!

-- वली राम

What use will it be to a person to drink the Amrit (Divine Nectar) if he has not tasted the Elixir of Love? Of what use is it to one who has not sacrificed himself at the Altar of Love? Wali calls his Beloved incessantly, but the Beloved demands the surrender of the heart, without which He cannot be won. Thus Wali's crying, 'O my Beloved!' throughout the night is fruitless. (Wali Ram)

The people of the world are engrossed in reading scriptures, but they have not really understood them. If one should read only 'two and one-half' letters of 'love प्रेम', he would then understand the real meaning of love. [In Hindi language the word Love (Prem) consists of two and half letters.] Maulana Rumi says,

आं रुह रा किह् इश्के—हकीकी शिआर नीस्त,
नाबूदा बिह किह् बूदने—ऊ गैरे—आर नीस्त ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 53)

The soul that does not contain love for God would be better off if it did not exist at all, for if such a soul is dwelling within a human form, it is receiving no benefit therefrom and is living a life of shame.

हर किह् दर ऊ नीस्त अजीं इश्क़—रंग,
निजदे—खुदा नीस्त बजुज चोबो—संग ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 193)

A person who has not been dyed in the hue of love has no more value in the eyes of God than a piece of wood or stone.

उम्रे किहू बे-इश्क़ रपत हेच हिसाबश मगीर,
आबे-हयातस्त इश्क़ दर दिलो-जानश पजीर।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 158)

The life that is passed without love is without any benefit, for love is an elixir for the heart.

Shams-i-Tabriz further states:

गर तुरा बख़्ते-यार ख़्वाहद बूद, इश्क़ रा बा तू कार ख़्वाहद बूद।
उम्रे-बे-आशिकी मदार हिसाब, क-आं बरुं अज शुमार ख़्वाहद बूद।
हर रवाने किहू मीरवद बे-इश्क़, पेशे-हक्क शर्मसार ख़्वाहद बूद।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 116)

Love is attained only through great good fortune. Without it, life is fruitless. Only a very few extremely fortunate persons are blessed with the gift of love. The part of life that is wasted without love for God should not be counted, for it is all useless. If life is passed without love, one will be shamed before the Altar of God.

Kabir Sahib also says the same thing:

जेहि घट प्रेम न प्रीति रस, पुनि रसना नहिं नाम।
ते नर पसु संसार में, उपजि खपे बेकाम॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (वेतावनी का अंग 33, पृ० 61)

A person in whose heart there is no love, and who does not have the Name of God on his tongue, is no better than a beast; and he dies without having received any of the benefits of his human birth.

प्रेम बिना जो भक्ति है, सो निज डिंभ बिचार।
उद्र भरन के कारने, जनम गँवायो सार॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (भक्ति का अंग 21, पृ० 33)

Devotion without love is all sham. Ignorant people lose all the benefits of the valuable human form with which they have been endowed by simply filling their stomachs like beasts.

जा घट प्रेम न संचरे, सो घट जानु मसान।
जैसे खाल लोहार की, साँस लेत बिन प्रान॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 11, पृ० 46)

The body in which love does not exist should be considered a crematorium. Such a one is breathing without life, like the bellows of a blacksmith.

Guru Arjan says,

अति सुंदर कुलीन चतुर मुखि डिआनी धनवंत ॥

मिरतक कहीअहि नानका जिह प्रीति नही भगवंत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी बावन अखरी म० 5, पृ० 253)

A person may be very handsome, may belong to a prominent family, may be extremely wealthy and clever, and may be a gifted speaker; but if he does not possess devotion to God, O Nanak, he should be considered no better than a corpse.

Except for the Divine Love, all other types are undesirable. So long as we do not sacrifice that to which we are most attached, at the altar of God's love, we cannot obtain Salvation. Our soul is the hidden treasure of love, and it is most essential that we turn our attention from the world and its objects and direct it towards Him.

Love of Saints, and of Ordinary People

Saints always teach only love, because love and God are one. God is love, and God's reflection is love. The only difference between the Saints and other people is in the quality of their love. Saints are love incarnate and bestow the gift of love on others. They love the evil people, as well as the good ones, and their love is of the highest type. Love is the true religion and real guide.

Some people say that we should love God's creation, so that we may be able to love God. On the surface, this principle appears feasible, but if we go deeper, we shall be able to see that this principle is not entirely correct, for pure love is free from all attachment to the world of matter and illusion, and is found only in the regions beyond the reach of mind and Maya (matter and illusion).

In the lower regions, love is entangled in physical matter and attachments. Consequently, it is covered with worldly dross because of our selfish motives. The love of those who are engrossed in the pleasures of the world is full of the poison of physical attachment. This way of living cannot create pure love in us, because such poisonous love causes

us great harm; and it is impossible for us to free ourselves from it by our own efforts alone. This lower type of love will further entangle us in worldly attachments and will definitely not create Divine Love.

The Saints, however, possess the pure spark of love for God alone. If we love them, then love for God will be kindled within us. God is omnipresent. So, when we love Him we love His whole creation, and we thus radiate currents of love for all.

God is Shabd, God is love. Therefore, Shabd is also love. Saints are Shabd incarnate. They bestow the gift of Shabd on others. Those who practice Shabd and listen to the Divine Music become oceans of love. They love everybody and by the currents of this Divine Love, radiate a virtuous influence in this world.

The highest form of all practices is to create love within. If the spark of love is removed from rituals and ceremonies, they are nothing but empty formalities and are unable to attach us to the love of God. We may succeed to a certain extent in creating love within ourselves for human beings, but such a love will naturally not be lasting. Real and lasting love can be achieved, however, if we sit at the Lotus Feet of a highly evolved soul (a Saint or Master).

The dormant love within our souls can be awakened by the practice of Shabd शब्द, which keeps us above the dross of Maya माया. Generally, lecturers or teachers who are devoid of any practical spiritual consciousness and who have had no opportunity to seek and love a Master, advocate in their speeches that there is no harm in love for each other – male and female; but in actual practice many cases have occurred where people who listened to such advice have fallen into the pitfall created by the snares of Maya. We should love only Ram Naam राम-नाम, that is the Name of God, or His Saints. All other types of love only succeed in binding us to this world.

The teachings of the Saints do not imprison a disciple in rituals and ceremonies. Their teachings guide us to awaken

the dormant love within ourselves, the love that is inherent in the soul. This love can be awakened by devotion to the Master, and by the inner contact of Shabd.

Nowadays, religions are considered to be embodiments of noble ideals with virtuous and philosophical thoughts added to them. Prayer is also added, and all these things aid us in creating in our minds an appetite for God's love. But this is not food for the soul, which is hungry and which can be fed only by Shabd or Naam: By means of Shabd, the real love is kindled within us, and that is the food which alone can satisfy the soul. Once this love has been awakened within us, it will do everything for us, and we will find this food of love in the entire world. Without awakening the true love within ourselves, we cannot tread the path of true spirituality.

Love is True Worship and True Austerity

Many people subject themselves to austerities and perform various difficult practices. If the object of these austerities is to achieve supernatural powers, it is actually a trap to further entangle one in the snares of Maya. Such practices only succeed in moving one farther away from the goal of God Consciousness.

A devotee practiced various austerities with considerable diligence for many years and finally acquired the power to walk on water. But actually a devotee (one who spends the same amount of time in practicing Shabd), who crosses the river in a boat by spending a trifling sum and conserving his spiritual powers, is far superior. The labour expended during many years in achieving the power to walk on water is without any actual spiritual value.

Love is the true austerity, which bestows humility, teaches us to remain in the Mauj मौज (Will) of the Beloved, and removes the attention from worldly pleasures and pains. Such a mind does not waver, and is always fixed in the Beloved. If such a person were to face difficulties or troubles,

he would bear them without complaint, for he remembers only the Beloved in his heart, and he creates a new world of love around himself. He is not attracted by the outer world, nor affected by its troubles. In addition to this, the spiritual secrets are disclosed within him and he comes nearer to God-realization.

Such a happy state of love is the possession of a rare devotee. This love is sweet and has attractive powers. When it is achieved, all other attractions are burnt up, and only the Name of God remains in the heart of the devotee. This love is a bright flame in which everything is consumed except the Beloved.

Actually, when the fire of love is fully kindled, nothing remains in the devotee, because everything is consumed by the flame of true love.

Love is the Basis of all Activity

All activities, religions and repetitions or remembrances are based on love. It is a true and beautiful ornament which decorates the soul.

माई मेरे मन की प्रीति ॥

एही करम धरम जप एही राम नाम निरमल है रीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (टोडी 5, पृ० 716)

O my mother! The love in my heart is my daily activity, is my prayer, and is also the True Ram Naam (Name of God).

सोहागणी सीगारु बणाइआ गुण का गलि हारु ॥

प्रेम पिरमलु तनि लावणा अंतरि रतनु वीचारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 426)

The bride (soul) has bedecked herself with ornaments, viz., the necklace of virtuous qualities, the bindi (red dot on the forehead) of love, and the jewels of spiritual knowledge.

Love is True Prayer

Love is the true prayer to God. By this kind of prayer, the lover is so intoxicated with the ecstasy of love that he cannot even walk with steadiness and staggers. When the

flame of love is kindled in his heart, his eyes light up with happiness and joy, and he thrills to the rapturous currents of ecstasy. Such a state of intoxication in the remembrance of the Lord is far better than thousands of other methods of trying to reach Him. By repeating the Name of the Lord only once, love is felt in every cell of the devotee's body.

In other words, it (repetition) comes from the heart, and tears flow from the eyes in an unending stream.

मी रसी दर कअबा ज़ाहिद गर रवी राहे—तरी,

जुहद खुश्क ओ सौमे—तू बे—दीदाए गिरियां अबस ।

If you wish to go to Kaaba (the highest place of Muslim pilgrimage), you should go by the path of tears in your eyes. Then you will reach that place in no time. Fasting without devotion and prayer, without tears, will not bear fruit.

Prayers without tears, the counting of beads without melting of the heart, repetition (of the Name of God) without love, reading Scriptures without devotion, are all roads leading towards the door of God. However, in these activities there is no devotion in the heart, not any tears in the eyes, and the road is naturally dry and endless. But if one's heart is drenched with tears of love flowing from the eyes, communion with God is attained much sooner.

Love is the true form of worship of God. Without it, knowledge and contemplation are useless, and he who remains without love, is unable to inculcate within himself the secrets of achieving God-realization. Prayer and meditation without love will not achieve the desired results, even if performed for years. So long as a person does not kindle the spark of love within himself, he remains without the secret knowledge of God.

Various methods are practiced with the aim of attaining communion with the Lord: repetition or remembrance, austerities, devotion, detachment, knowledge, the practice of yoga and many others. But true love is a much higher and nobler observance than any one of these. The very basis of all these methods is love. Without love, no method or its practice will take a person to the Court of the Lord. Without love,

yogic practices are as good – perhaps as bad – as a disease, because one cannot succeed by such methods.

Guru Arjan says,

जप तप संजम हरख सुख मान महत अरु गरब ॥

मूसन निमखक प्रेम परि वारि वारि देंउ सरब ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वउबोले म० 5, पृ० 1364)

Chanting and intense meditation, austere self-discipline, pleasure and peace, greatness and pride – O Musan, I would dedicate and sacrifice all these for a moment of my Lord's Love.

Maulana Rumi says,

ऐ खुनक चश्मे किह आं गिरयाने-ऊस्त ।

वै हुमायूं दिल किह आं बिरयाने-ऊस्त ।

आखिरे-हर गिरया आखिर खंदा ईस्त ।

मर्दे-आखिर बीं मुबारक बंदा ईस्त ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 1, पृ० 111)

That eye is fortunate, which sheds pearls of tears in the remembrance of its Beloved. That heart is fortunate, which is burning in separation from its Lord, because every spell of remorse is accompanied by a unique happiness. A person whose only aim is towards this end, is the most fortunate one.

Just as rain is a blessing for the earth and enables it to produce multi-coloured flowers and beautiful shrubs and trees, in the same manner when tears from the eyes fall on the earth of the heart, the buds of the secrets of the knowledge of God burst into blossoms. The path of love is therefore the highest, so much so that God Himself is love.

Love is the life and spirit of all practices. No practice can be beneficial without love. Love is a force that has no equal, and its praise is sung in the Vedas, Puranas and other religious Scriptures. All Saints, Sages, Fakirs, Incarnations and evolved souls such as Guru Nanak, Kabir, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Shams-i-Tabriz, etc., were worshipers at the altar of love, because it is the easiest and the shortest path leading to communion with God.

Through love alone can God be realized. Guru Gobind Singh says,

साच कहाँ सुन लेहु सभै, जिन प्रेम कीओ तिनही प्रभु पाइओ ।

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (अकाल उस्तत 9/29)

Listen one and all! I speak the truth – those who love, alone realize the Lord. (Sridasam.org p.15)

A saint has said:

प्रेम किया तिन ही प्रभु पायो । बिना प्रेम कछु हाथ न आयो ।।

Whosoever has loved, has found God. Nobody has succeeded in achieving this end without love.

He further says,

राम राम सब को कहे, ठग ठाकुर अरु चोर ।

बिना प्रेम रीझे नहीं, तुलसी नंद किशोर ।।

A holy person, a thief, a robber – all try to remember God; but He cannot be pleased without the spark of love.

Kabir Sahib says,

जोगी जंगम सेवड़ा, सन्यासी दुरवेस ।

बिना प्रेम पहुँचै नहीं, दुरलभ सतगुरु देस ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 31, पृ० 48)

A yogi, a celibate, an ascetic, a philosopher – none amongst them is able to realize God without love, because the region of Satguru is the most difficult to approach.

All austerities and practices are empty without love. Knowledge and contemplation in themselves are also unsuccessful efforts, but all these practices are performed only to inculcate love. If there is no love, then all meditations are dry and useless.

Love is the most powerful and effective of all practices to meet the Lord. It is the only method by which one can attain communion with Him in an instant. Maulana Rum says,

रहे—आसमां दराजस्त परे—इश्क रा बजुबां,

परे—इश्क चूं कशूदी गमे—नर्दबां नमानद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज (पृ० 134)

If the road is lengthy, you should fly on the wings of love. When you unfold the wings of love, you need not ascend by means of the steps.

He further states:

सवारे—इश्क शौ दर रह मयंदेश, किह् अस्पे—इश्क बस रहवार बाशद ।

बयक साअत तुरा मंजिल रसानद, अगरचिह् राह नाहम्वार बाशद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज (पृ० 131)

You should ride on the steed of love and go forward without fear, because that steed is very swift. The path may have ups and downs, but it will take you to your Goal in no time at all.

Love is Higher than Religion, Rituals, etc.

The state of love is much higher than that of religion, rituals, etc. A person who is intoxicated with the wine of love will reach the goal by means of a single sigh, as compared to thousands of years spent in other methods.

Who can understand the waves of ecstasy that arise in the heart of a person intoxicated with Love? Only he can taste this, who has himself trodden the path. A heart devoid of love cannot understand this.

One Has to Dedicate His Life, Bravely and Quietly in True Love

True love is like a fathomless ocean which has no shores, and there is no help for anyone overwhelmed by such love, unless he sacrifices his own life. Hafiz says,

हाफिज़ अंदर दर्दो—ग़म मी सोज़ ओ बा दरमां मसाज़,
जाकिह् दरमाने नदारद दर्दो—बे—दरमाने—ऊस्त ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 98)

You must go on burning in sorrow and pain and you must not resort to any treatment for this condition, for there is no remedy for this pain. It is a burning longing for communion with the Beloved, and for this there is no remedy.

Just as life is not possible without breath, similarly a lover's life exists only in his beloved. The lover is always unhappy in the love for his beloved, and sacrifices himself like a moth that flies into the flame, as soon as it sees a spark of fire. Hafiz says,

मरा चू ख़िलअते—सुलताने—इश्क़ मीदादंद,
निदा ज़दंद किह् हाफिज़ ख़मोश बाश ख़मोश ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 225)

When the Emperor of love presented a robe to me, the meaning of the gift was very clearly explained to me in the following

language: 'O Hafiz! Be careful. You must remain quiet because this is not the path of the talkative. It is the path on which one has to merge oneself in love and become love itself.

Again, Hafiz says,

हाफिज़ सबूर बाश किह् दर राहे—आशिकी,
हर कस किह् जां नदाद बजानां नमी रसद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 192)

Have patience in your heart, for so long as you do not sacrifice your life on this path, you cannot travel up to your Beloved.

Love is the Path of Surrender

In love, there is no law except the Will of the Beloved. Whatever the Beloved orders or commands, the lover bows his head in obedience. A wealthy man cannot dream of his own commands in the state of love, where one must undertake to be humble and agree to be subservient. Ego and love cannot remain together. Kabir says,

पीया चाहे प्रेम रस, राखा चाहै मान ।
एक म्यान में दो खड़ग, देखा सुना न कान ।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 32, पृ० 48)

If you wish to taste the Nectar of Love, you cannot be arrogant. Two swords cannot be contained in a single scabbard.

A lover prefers to be wounded by the arrows of love, than to wound another person with them. Love knows only how to give, its principal characteristic being the surrender of one's life and breath. Love does not know how to command. A lover considers it to be his good fortune, when he is bound by the commands of others.

Real love removes the lover from the worries of pleasure and pain, praise and blame, poverty and wealth, and takes him beyond all such limitations. Love enters every cell of the lover and gives him unlimited power, so that he is never in need of wealth or fame, or honor or name. He has no desire for this world or the next. He is freed from the web of heaven and hell. He is no longer tempted into the snares of rituals or worldly ties.

To demand worldly conveniences from God is to separate oneself from the aims of love. Not to remain in His Will, nor to be contented in happiness or even in pain is to fall down from the heights of devotion. A lover loves only the Beloved, and the Beloved is the be-all and end-all for him. He sees only the light of his Beloved in this world and in the sky above. The Beloved is his real world. Nearness to the Beloved is his heaven, and being away from the Beloved is his hell.

Only the Name and praises of his Beloved are on his tongue – nothing else. The repetition of the same Name is never-ceasing, and sighs of separation, when the Beloved is farther away from him, are wrung from his body as well as his heart. He asks for nothing from the Beloved except the Beloved and longs to surrender himself entirely to the wishes of the Beloved. In the ecstasy of his love and in his complete surrender, he considers poverty or wealth, pain or pleasure, health or illness, and whatever else may happen as gifts from the Beloved. He feels no difference between pleasure and pain. By the Grace of love, he rises above these things and remains above the limitations of the body.

Real love demands complete surrender. Not only this, but one must be happy in the happiness of the Beloved, and must not wish to go beyond the Will of the Beloved. To him, all worldly things are dead, and he leaves them for the persons hankering after them. He shatters the glass of his own intellect and remains only in the Will of the Beloved. He has only one aim, and that is the remembrance of the Beloved. His life is spent in the Will of the Beloved. He wishes for neither happiness nor sorrow, but is contented in His Will. If a misfortune comes to him, he forgets the pain of that misfortune. People of the world, at one time or another, make demands from God. But a lover asks for the Beloved and nothing else. Sheikh Sa'adi says,

गोयंद तमन्नाए अज दोस्त बकुन सअदी,

जुज दोस्त नख्वाहद करद अज दोस्त तमन्नाई ।

-- शेख सादी

People tell me to demand something from my Beloved, but I shall demand only Him from Him – nothing more.

Similarly, a disciple bows his head to the Will of his Master in the same way that a dead body lies inert like a mound of earth, without any will of its own. In such a state, one receives the highest type of spiritual wealth. Another Saint says,

कुशतगाने-खंजरे-तस्लीम रा, हर ज़मां अज़ गैब जाने-दीगर अस्त ।

One who has been wounded by the sharp sword of surrender and sacrifice, receives every minute fresh life from the secret power of God.

Bhai Gur Das says,

मुरदा होय मुरीद न गली होवणा ।।

साबरु सिदकि सहीदु भरम भउ खोवणा ।

-- भाई गुरदास (तारां गिआन रतनावली, 3:18)

No one has become a disciple by mere lip service. A disciple's will should be like that of a dead person. He should move as he is moved, work as he is desired to work, and should not work against His Will.

We cannot have communion with our Beloved, so long as we do not remove our attention from worldly desires and do not go beyond the limitations of our own mind. Love is beyond all limitations. One reaches it only after shedding the dross of mind and intellect. A devotee sees the Light of his Beloved only when he forgets himself in the ecstasy of love. Then he sees Him everywhere.

The madness of a lover's ecstasy brings before his eyes a new world, which is beyond this physical region and beyond the region of mind, and he takes every word of the Beloved as a sweet command. To live in Him is the highest and sweetest elixir. It is even dearer than life. The current of love takes one beyond good and evil, belief and unbelief, to a state so sublime that it cannot be described. One who is intoxicated in this unique state of bliss – in which any thought of separation or communion is lost – becomes an embodiment of love.

Real love will not permit one to follow one's own bent of mind. Real love is another name for implicitly following

the desires of the Beloved and desiring only to please Him by remaining in His Will. In such a state, one does not consider his own comforts or discomforts, but effaces his own self for the comfort and convenience of the Beloved. He feels a rare and special bliss or happiness, so great even in discomforts that the people of the world cannot begin to imagine them.

This does not mean that it is the lover only who suffers. The Beloved suffers much more for the sake of the lover. The moth burns only once and is free from all pain, but the flame burns all the time.

In love, one must sacrifice one's own possessions and forget the self completely. A spark of real love is eternal, and by it, the self or ego is completely consumed or obliterated. Physically, the lover may appear to be suffering, but inwardly he feels a higher type of happiness, which no one else can realize.

Real love turns poison into nectar, fire into ice, snakes into garlands of flowers, pain into pleasure, and blame into praise. To a lover, to be flayed alive is no more than a child's play, for to him, it is simply like removing a garment. It is nothing for him to go to the scaffold smiling and to sacrifice his life. These are all considered blessings in the arena of love. How can anybody describe or understand this? Kabir says,

कबीर जिसु मरने ते जगु डरै मेरे मनि आनंदु ।।
मरने ही ते पाईऐ पूरनु परमानंदु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1365)

O Kabir! Death, of which the whole world is afraid, brings happiness to my mind, for real bliss can be attained only by death.

Love is the Path of Sacrifice

There is no question of gaining anything in love. It is not something that can be bought in a grocer's shop. Love is a matter of giving, and not of taking. Surrender your body, mind, life, beliefs – then only will you know the bliss of walking in the precincts of love. Sarmad says,

दिल दादम ओ जान दादम ओ ईमान दादम,
सूद अस्त मगर सूद नमी दानम चीस्त ।

-- ग़ज़ाली-ए-समद (रूबाई 69, पृ० 61)

I gave up my body, I gave up my life, and also gave up my beliefs. The whole world is entangled in these things, but all these entanglements have been removed from me. What greater blessing could anyone wish for?

मनु तनु धनु आगै राखिआ सिरु वंचिआ गुर आगै जाइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधायीक म० 3, पृ० 1413)

Mind, body and wealth are placed before my Master, and my very life is sold to Him for the sake of His love.

One should happily lose his life (give up the ego) in this path and should not expect anything in return. Khusro says,

शाद बाश ऐ दिल किह फ़रदा बर सरे-बाज़ारे-इश्क,
मुज़दा-ए-क़ल्ल अस्त गरचिह वअदा-ए-दीदार नीस्त ।

-- अमीर खुसरो

O heart, you should be happy because you will be slain tomorrow in the bazaar of love, but there is no guarantee that you will see the Beloved.

Maulana Rumi says,

हर किरा जामा जि इश्क़े चाक शुद,
ऊ जि हिर्सो-ऐबे-कुल्ली पाक शुद ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 1, पृ० 33)

Where there is love, there is no thought of personal gain; both cannot be together. When the body is dyed in the hue of love, it is cleansed of all evils and desires.

Kabir says,

प्रेम न बाड़ी रूपजै, प्रेम न हाट बिकाय ।
राजा परजा जेहि रुचै, सीस देइ लै जाइ ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 3, पृ० 45)

Love does not grow on trees; Love is not sold in the market. On this path the poor and the rich are on the same level. Whosoever surrenders himself, gains thereby.

In the path of love, we have to destroy our ego. We have to leave pride behind us. The Beloved cannot be met, unless one is completely devoid of these qualities. Maulana Rumi says,

हेच कस रा ता नगरदद ऊ फ़ना, नीस्त रह दर बारगाहे—क्रिबिया ।

-- मसजदी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 6, पृ० 36)

One cannot reach the Court of the Lord so long as he does not lose himself.

दर दबिस्ताने महबूत अबजद अज़ खुद रफ़्तगी अस्त,

मअनीए—बिस्मिल्लाह फ़हमद आं कसे कू बिरुमल अस्त ।

रह नवरदाने—महबूत रा पयाम अज़ मा रसां,

क—अंदरीं राह यक कदम अज़ खुद गुज़श्तन मंज़िल अस्त ।

One can start with the A-B-C in the school of love only after he has removed his 'self'. Only that person can understand the beginning of treading towards this path, who has been wounded by the arrows of love. Those who intend to travel on the path of love should heed my message, viz. that they can tread it only if they have completely lost their self.

True Love is not for Weaklings

Love is a beautiful ocean of nectar. Once a person dived into it, he receives eternal life. In this world people talk about love in one form or the other, and everybody desires to inculcate love in himself, but the real path of love is the most difficult one. It is not for those who insist on a life of ease and comfort. It is only for those who are prepared to sacrifice their life. Those who wish to follow this path, go towards it with their head (ego) on the palms of their hands. Hafiz says,

नाज़ परवरदे—तनउम्म नबर्द राह बदोस्त,

आशिकी शेवा—ए—रिदाने—बलाकश बाशद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 210)

To go toward the Beloved is not the work of ease-loving people. To enter into this profession of love is the work of Saints who are always in a state of ecstasy and are not concerned with the worries of this world. To love is not the work of weaklings and cowards. Only the brave and strong-minded can enter it.

To take to the path of love is not the work of ordinary people. Only these who are fearless and who are prepared to sacrifice their very lives can do so. Cowards cannot

approach it. The Lord of love is very high, and it is not possible for weaklings to gain access to His Court. So long as we do not sacrifice our head at the altar of our Beloved, we cannot succeed on the path of love. Hafiz says,

कमीना शर्ते—वफ़ा तर्के—सर बुवद हाफ़िज़,
बिरौ अगर जि तू ई कार बर नमी आयद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 207)

The least condition that love demands is the surrender of one's head (ego). If you are not able to do this, you should go away and not even talk of love.

Kabir says,

प्रेम पियाला जो पियै, सीस दच्छिना देय ।
लोभी सीस न दे सकै, नाम प्रेम का लेय ।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 4, पृ० 45)

The cup of love can be enjoyed only by those who are prepared to sacrifice their head (ego). It is not the work of a greedy person, who is not capable of sacrificing himself. His talk of love is only superficial.

Kabir further states that love is not an easy thing. Only he can enter the abode of love, who is prepared to leave his head on the ground. Not only should he place his head on the ground, but he should also step on it. If one can do this, he is ready to tread the path of love; for then alone, will he be able to taste the elixir of love.

This means, in other words, that when the soul is concentrated at the eye-centre, it is supposed to have entered the home of love, and only then is it able to taste love's unique elixir. Kabir says,

यह तो घर है प्रेम का, खाला का घर नाहिं ।
सीस उतारे भुईं धरै,, तब पैठै घर माहिं ।।
सीस उतारै भुईं धरै,, ता पर राखै पाँव ।
दास कबीरा यों कहै, ऐसा होय तो आव ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 1,2, पृ० 45)

This is not the home of your aunty (mother's sister). It is the home of love. You can enter it only after you put your head on the ground and step on it.

यह तो घर है प्रेम का, मारग अगम अगाध ।

सीस काटि पग तल धरै, तब निकट प्रेम का स्वाद ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 54, पृ० 49)

If you can do this, then you may enter, for this is the home of love, the indescribable path – high above – and you can come near it only if you are able to cut off your head and put your foot on it (i.e., completely surrender yourself).

Another Saint, Nagari Das, speaks in a similar vein:

सीस काट आगे धरे, ता पर राखे पाँव ।

इश्क चमन के बीच में, ऐसा होय ताँ आव ॥

-- नागरी दास

Only those who are able to cut off their head (i.e., banish their ego) and step on it, are able to enter the garden of love.

On this path, one has to sacrifice his very life. It will be better if you give it to your Beloved. Otherwise, one day, the Angel of Death is sure to take it away. Why not do it yourself?

Love knows only how to give. One has to abandon all desires and to leave all power and fame, and has to become the slave of someone. Such is love. To achieve true love, is to lose one's self completely in love. One has to awaken in one's Beloved and completely merge in God. That is love. It is a work of sacrifice and surrender. To meet the Beloved is very difficult, because one has to bargain for this path with one's own head. Guru Nanak Sahib says,

जउ तउ प्रेम खेलण का चाउ ॥ सिरु धरि तली गली मेरी आउ ॥

इतु मारगि पैरु धरीजै ॥ सिरु दीजै काणि न कीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 1, पृ० 1412)

If you are fond of playing the game of love, come to my lane with your head on the palm of your hand. You should travel on this path only if you are prepared to surrender yourself and claim nothing.

The Path of Love is Difficult

The path of love appears to be quite easy, but it is as difficult as Raja Yoga राज-योग, Karma Yoga कर्म-योग or the path of Vedanta वेदान्त. In order to travel any one of these paths, it is necessary to efface one's self.

How very difficult it is to please anybody in this world! Man tries hard to do so, but is not always successful. How much more difficult it is for him to please God!

The path of love is as sharp and as narrow as the edge of a sword. There is room for only one to tread on it. Here God and the devotee have to become one, and the least waver or negligence on the part of the devotee will cause his downfall. Therefore, only the strong-willed can follow this path with the support of God and the Master and by surrendering themselves at all times into the lap of the Beloved. Such fortunate devotees are guided at every step and cannot fall.

Love is not the Work of the Greedy or the Conscience-Sellers

Love is a pure emotion. Everybody cannot obtain it. Those who are given to worldly pleasures only waste their lives in enjoying transitory pleasures and remain devoid of the true wealth.

Sarmad says,

सरमद गमे—इश्क, बुलहवस रा नदिहंद,
सोजे—दिले—परवाना, मगस रा नदिहंद ।
उम्रे बायद किह् यार आयद ब कनार,
ई दौलते—सरमद हमा कस रा नहिहंद ।

-- नरमा-ए-सरमद (रुबाई 94, पृ० 73)

God does not bestow the pangs of love on those who are lost in worldly greed. How can a bee realize the burning sensation of a moth which loses its life the moment it sees a light? It takes a long time to meet the Beloved, for the treasure of love cannot be given to everybody.

Jami Sahib says,

जामी गमे—दोस्त रा ब—आलम नदिही,
बा हर किह् न ऊस्त शरहे—ई गम नहिही ।

-- जामी

The pangs of love for the Beloved cannot be obtained by everybody in this world. This treasure is only for those who are living for it alone.

Love cannot be gained without devotion to a Master. A worldly man cannot understand it. Only those, who have one-pointed attention, can share it; that is, those whose mind and heart are one, and who have faith and devotion. A person who is prepared to sell his conscience or, in other words, to deceive himself, cannot drink from the cup of love. To tread the path of love is the work of those resolute souls, who will not turn back, no matter what may befall them. They alone can meet the Beloved. But those who have only shallow pangs of separation, fall down long before they are able to reach the Goal.

Love is the Path of a Madman

This is not the place for vain arguments and discussions. Hafiz says,

ता फ़ज़ल ओ इल्म बीनी बे—मअरफ़त नशीनी,
यक नुक्ता अत बिगोयम खुद रा मर्बी किह् रुस्ती।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 385)

So long as your mind is spread out in cleverness and knowledge, you will not be able to know the real Truth. I wish to give you one piece of good advice: You should not admire yourself, but destroy your ego, so that you may attain freedom.

He further states:

ज़ि कुंजे—मदरिसा हाफ़िज़ मजूए गौहरे—इश्क़,
क़दम बरुं न अगर मैले—जुस्तजू दारी।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 414)

Do not try to search for the pearl of love in schools. If you desire to find it, you should go beyond them. You should hide your heart in the locks of your Beloved's hair, and become totally oblivious of the world. In other words, you should remain in a state of ecstasy in the contemplation of your Beloved, for the arguments of your intellect will be harmful in the path of love.

Again, he says,

दर रहे—मज़िले—लैला किह् ख़तरहास्त बजां,
शर्ते—अव्वल क़दम आनस्त किह् मजनूं बाशी।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 376)

The path of love is full of innumerable dangers. The first requisite is that you should leave your intellect behind.

The Influence of Love

Love itself is the beginning and the end. It is a pure emanation of God's current, which enters the heart of a pure person and spreads its influence all round, thus purifying the entire area. The heart of a lover is pure, and at the same time, those who have the opportunity of meeting him, cannot escape his purifying influence. If one comes across such pure souls, his heart is so greatly influenced that he feels as if purity has entered into him from head to foot. Love is not worldly or material. It is divine. If you see two hearts sacrificing their very existence at the altar of love, you should understand that they are vessels filled with divine influence. By their mere touch, even withered hearts become fresh and are renewed. You cannot conceal it.

Even if the tongue does not speak, the eyes reveal it by the tears that fill them. Kabir says,

प्रेम छिपाया ना छिपे, जा घट परघट होय ।

जो पै मुख बोलै नहीं, तो नैन देत हैं रोय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 29, पृ० 47)

Try hard to conceal love. But it cannot be concealed, once it has taken hold of a person. Even if one does not talk about it, the eyes disclose it.

The refreshing rainfall comes from the sky, but when the eyes of two lovers meet, they are flooded with tears of love. It takes time for a Swanti drop स्वाँति बूँद to turn into a pearl, but the water oozing from loving eyes flows like a string of shining pearls. The dryness within is removed, and one's entire being is refreshed from head to foot.

Just as milk and water become one when mixed, the two loving hearts blend themselves into divine union with the water of love. It is then difficult for them to be separate entities. Love is true. It contains no deceit and no superficiality. Coming under its influence, two hearts unite into one in such a manner that one cannot detect any difference between them. Then one

is not able to find out who is the disciple and who the Master, who is the lover and who the Beloved. The curtain of duality is removed. The lover and the Beloved become one.

मन तू शुदम तू मन शुदी मन तन शुदम तूं जां शुदी,
ता कस नगोयद बअद अजीं मन दीगरम तू दीगरी।

-- अमीर खुसरो (पृ० 112)

You are me, I am you. You are body, I am the life. Let nobody say hereafter that I and you are different. If I am the body, you are the life. If I am the life, you are the body. You have surrendered your heart to me. I have surrendered my heart to you. Two bodies now have one life and one emotion. This is the ideal of love. How can a third person realize it!

Love is a sword by which two lovers combine into one. The lover adores the Beloved to such an extent that he becomes his very self. It is said that Radha was so deeply engrossed in her love that she considered herself as Lord Krishna. In this state of rapture she would ask her friends, if they had seen Radha anywhere. This type of union has also been described by Bulleh Shah, as being a characteristic of Heer.

रांझा रांझा करदी नी मैं आपे रांझा होई।
सहो नी मैंनू धीदो रांझा हीर न आखो कोई।

-- कुलियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 123)

I have been crying, 'Ranjha, Ranjha' and I have become Ranjha. Please do not call me 'Heer' anymore, because I am now Ranjha.

Dadu says,

आसिक मासुक हवै गया, इसक कहावै सोइ।
दादू उस मासूक का, अल्लहि आसिक होइ।।

-- दादू दयाल की बानी भाग-1 (बिरह को अंग 147, पृ० 44)

Real love is that in which a lover transforms himself into the Beloved, and on such lovers God showers His Grace.

When love produces this condition in one's heart, he needs no meditation, prayer or any spiritual effort, because love is the real meditation, is the real prayer, is the real union. A true lover is a real believer in the oneness of God and is a true discernor of the jewel of His non-duality. But this does not convey the correct meaning. Actually he himself becomes the very embodiment of His attributes.

True union and one-pointed attention come only with love. The spiritual progress achieved by means of meditation over a number of years can be had in a moment through love, because the union of inner sight takes the lover immediately to the goal. This is real love and this is true yoga. In fact, this is the be-all and end-all. This should be our aim. This should be our goal, and this should be our fast, our prayers, our meditation and everything else. You should therefore kindle the light of love within you, and burn away the rut of repeating mantras, performing austerities, etc.

The value of a man's life is greatly enhanced by love, for the influence of love is unique. It lifts a man from the state of being a mere nothing to the celestial heights. Maulana Rumi says,

अज महब्त तल्लहा शीरी शवद, वज महब्त मिस्सहा जरी शवद ।
 अज महब्त दुर्दहा साफी शवद, वज महब्त दर्दहा शाफी शवद ।
 अज महब्त खारहा गुल मीशवद, वज महब्त सिरकहा मुल मीशवद ।
 अज महब्त संग रोगन मीशवद, वज महब्त मोम आहन मीशवद ।
 अज महब्त नेश नेश मीशवद, वज महब्त शेर मूशे मीशवद ।
 अज महब्त मुर्दा जिदा मीशवद, वज महब्त शाह बंदा मीशवद ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 2, पृ० 153-54)

With love, even bitter things become sweet, brass is turned into gold, Everything that is soiled becomes clean. With the pain of love in one's heart, love itself becomes the remedy for it.

Thorns then give the same pleasure and fragrance as would beautiful flowers. Under the influence of love, even the peevish temperament, which is as sour as vinegar, turns into a sweet intoxicant as that of wine.

People become as smooth as oil, as soft as wax, even if they were as hard as iron.

By love, poison becomes nectar, and a tiger is turned into a harmless mouse. Disease turns into a blessing, and tyranny into mercy.

The dead are even brought to life, and kings become slaves by means of love.

मर्दे-बे-इश्क बीमे अस्त, जिस्मे-बेजान गिज़ए-हैवान अस्त ।

Love is an intense light which shows us the way of spirituality. A person is blind without love. He is also lifeless, and a dead body is no more than food for beasts.

Love eliminates all Worries

The object of love is to lose oneself in the identity of the Beloved. True love is continuously on the increase and always radiates its fragrance. It never wanes. Bulleh Shah says,

इश्क दी नवियों नवीं बहार ।

-- बुल्लेशाह

The spring of love is always fresh.

The devotee becomes true and pure through love. In him there is sympathy and there is love, by means of which he achieves the realization of union (with God). Love is an alchemy, which turns simple folk into spiritual gods. Love is the remedy for all ills. It removes all pain and sorrow.

By means of love the dirt of the mind is washed away, and the souls shines forth in its own light and becomes worthy of meeting the Lord. The intoxication of love removes all dross and helps the soul to rise and travel upwards through the (super-conscious) spiritual regions.

The Reward of Love

The flame of love is lit within a few fortunate devotees. As soon as it is kindled, all dross is burnt away, that is, the devotee becomes pure and clean internally, and can then see the Light and hear the Shabd (Word or Sound Current) of God within himself.

One who desires to achieve communion with the Almighty Father should first of all wash the dirt from his mind with the water of love. The bandage of ego should be removed from our eyes, because then alone it is possible for us to see the Lord. And this bandage can be removed only by emptying ourselves of everything except the remembrance of the Beloved. No thought of any kind should be allowed to enter between the devotee and the object of his devotion.

Love is so exalting that it takes us beyond the conception of good and evil, and completely merges us into the Beloved. Muinuddin Chishti says,

न इसियां मांदने ताअत, शुदम महव अंदर आं साअत,
चुनां गश्तम दर आं हालत, किहू वै मन गश्त मन हम वै।

-- दीवाने-ग़रीब नवाज़ (पृ० 227-28)

There is no evil; there is no good. I am so absorbed in the form of my Beloved that He has become my form within me and I have become His form. We two have become but one.

How very fortunate is the devotee, who sacrifices himself in the fire of love, and thereby destroys his ego and meets the Lord. So long as one does not lose himself, he cannot see the Lord. If you wish to purchase God, you have to sell yourself to Him.

One who is devoid of love is imprisoned within the circle of selfishness. His life is worse than that of a beast, for he is caught in the net of selfishness and is blinded with the arrogance of his own ego. He is a prisoner within the limitations of his own self. He can see nothing beyond himself.

Love is essential for attaining God-realization. That is why true seekers always ask God only for His love, and nothing else. Maulana Rumi says,

इल्लते—आशिक़ जि इल्लतहा जुदास्त,
इश्क़ उस्तुरलाबे—असरारे—खुदास्त।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 1, पृ० 43)

The attraction of God's love is more intense than any other attraction. It is the attraction of the devotee for the Beloved, and this is also the key that enables one to unlock the secrets of God.

The scattered attention cannot be concentrated without love and it is not possible to enter the spiritual regions. So long as the soul does not go up, one remains ignorant of the knowledge of the spiritual regions.

Therefore, in order to achieve true knowledge, it is essential for one to love a True Master. It follows that without devotion to a True Master, we shall remain devoid of the realization of the nearness to God. True knowledge cannot be attained by intellect. It is to be perceived by the soul. In

order to achieve God-realization, we necessarily have to devote ourselves to a True Master.

There is no such thing as caste and creed in love. A lover cannot hate anyone, and whosoever has even a slight remembrance of God is very dear to Him. Lord Rama ate fruits which were half eaten by a low-caste woman. Devotion is not attained, so long as there is in the mind any question of caste and creed, high and low.

There is no law in love. There is no knowledge of any outside activity, for the mind is occupied in love to such an extent that even the days of the week are erased from the memory.

Kabir Sahib says,

जहाँ प्रेम तहँ नेम नहिं, तहाँ न बुधि ब्यौहार।

प्रेम मगन जब मन भया, तब कौन गिने तिथि बार।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 27, पृ० 47)

Wherever there is love, there is no formality. There is neither intellectual nor professional status. As soon as the mind becomes absorbed in love, the idea of dates and days of the week completely disappears from memory.

It is by the magic of love alone, that a lover removes the covering of his pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, knowledge and ignorance. In love, gain or loss are equal.

Love and Intellect

There is a vast difference between intellect and heart. It is as great as the distance between the earth and the heavens. Knowledge is connected with a person's intellect and is of a restless nature. It tries to take a person towards cleverness, and establishes a stronghold of selfishness in him. But the heart is connected with the inner currents emanating from a place where love and devotion are generated. In the path of spirituality the heart is more effective than the brain. Intellect merely brings light, but the power of spirituality is produced in the heart. Intellect is the cause of one's attention being scattered out into the world; but love removes us from this completely, by the concentration of attention.

The display of knowledge is a type of exercise for the brain, and its result is ego, anger, hatred and lack of faith. Love is another name for true affection. Pure love is essential in the development of spirituality.

When the heart is pure, God immediately attracts it towards Himself. If we have love for the Beloved, we shall certainly be attracted towards the object of our love. In our present state, the world is our beloved. Love for wife and for children has completely captivated our hearts, and we are no better than their prisoners.

If one worries about himself and his possessions, and loves and longs for wealth, heaven, and the like, how can he – a man of the world – attain God-Realization? So long as the dust of worldly desires is not removed from our heart, how can our Beloved attract us towards Him?

While living in this world one may give all his possessions to his relatives, friends, wife and children, but should not give his heart to anybody. The heart is the property of God, and one should not be false to this sacred trust. One should keep his heart for the True Beloved, and may give away everything else that he has.

There is a unique type of ecstasy in love which cannot be experienced by men of intellect. If people of the world were to know that the heart becomes extremely happy when it is drowned in the ocean of love, then many intellectuals would run after it in order to be tied down by the chords of love.

A man's intellect is limited. It cannot see beyond the world and its objects. Only true love can reach beyond these bounds, because love transcends all limitations and sees things which an intellectual cannot conceive of, even in his dreams. Shams-i-Tabrez has described the difference between knowledge and love in the following words:

अक्ल गोयद शश हदस्त ओ हेच बेरुं राह नीस्त,
 इश्क गोयद हस्त राह ओ रफ़्ता अम मन बारहा ।
 आशिकाने—खस्ता दिल रा दर दरुना जौकहा,
 आकिलाने—तीरा जां रा दर दरुं इनकार—हा ।

अक्ल गोयद पा मनिह क—अंदर फना जुज खार नीस्त,
इश्क गोयद हस्त दर तू मायाए—आं खारहा ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 12)

Knowledge says that the world is scattered in all the six directions – north, south, east, west, above and below – and that there is no path leading beyond this. Love says, 'There is a path and I have been on it many times'. A lover may be full of troubles, but in his mind there is always a surging wave of joy for the Beloved.

The intellectuals of the world spend their lives in groping the dark, which is full of worldly worries. The human intellect says that there is nothing beyond this body or physical life. It is followed by death and nothing else.

The path of love is full of the thorns of troubles, and one should not tread that path under any circumstances. But love says, 'Thorns there may be, but there are also life-giving flowers on that path. In love, one goes beyond this body, because then only can one find the life eternal. Therefore, do not be afraid of the thorns of this apparent death.

Maulana Rumi further states:

अक्ल बंदे—रह रवानस्त ऐ पिसर, बंद बिगुसल रह अयानस्त ऐ पिसर ।
चूं ज़ि अक्लो—जानो—दिल बरखास्ती, राहे—हक्क बर तू अयानस्त ऐ पिसर ।
हर किह ऊ मर आशिक़ां रा बंदा शुद, खुसरवे—साहिबे—कुरआन अस्त ऐ पिसर ।
हीं दहां बर बंद ओ खामुश चूं सदफ़, की ज़बानत खस्मे—जानस्त ऐ पिसर ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 153)

The intellectual cleverness is an impediment on the path towards God-Realization. You should free yourself from it, and then the path will be clear.

Knowledge may appear to be attractive, and its attractions also appear to be pleasing to the heart, but it is like a thick covering over the soul and life, and the path of spirituality is hidden.

You cannot unravel the way to this path with your intellect. When you disengage your heart and your life from the grasp of the intellect, then only will this path become easy for you.

Whosoever has become a slave of the love of God is a real emperor of great fortune. You should close your mouth like that of an oyster. You should not speak; otherwise, this very tongue of yours will be the enemy of your life.

When a person receives the secret of love and is intoxicated with it, then only will he know its depth and will no longer need the help of intellect and cleverness. Hafiz says,

दीवाना बाश ता गमे—तू दीगरां खुरंद,
आं रा किह् अक्ल बेश गमे—रोज़गार बेश ।

-- ख्वाजा हाफिज़

You should become so mad in the intoxication of love that others may be worried about you. On the other hand, the increase of intellect and knowledge in you will bring a corresponding increase in your worries.

There is no greater remedy than the madness of love. By means of this madness (ecstasy), you should transcend all worldly ties. Some people lose faith in their beloved, because of their shallow knowledge, but have you ever seen a man lose faith on account of his madness (ecstasy)?

If pain and worry have increased, then you must become love-mad, because by this madness the pain will decrease. Some people run from this world into the wilderness on account of worldly worries; but if they were to drink deep from the cup of the madness of love, they would be without worries even in this very world.

The whole world, whether a king or a beggar, is without this ecstasy of madness. But the few, who are in this state of rapture, are happy in this world. If you can find the wings of the ecstasy of madness, you will ascend into the heavens above, as did Christ. This ecstasy of love opens up for us hundreds of gates of the secrets of spirituality.

On the spiritual path, there is room only for lovers. Here, cleverness is of no use. Clever people have no respect or regard for others, and are not better than a particle of dust. They are not fit for this path.

Intellect, which is considered to be of the highest value in this world, hangs on the scaffold of a lover like a thief. People who are considered highly intellectual and of great knowledge in this world are perishable, and suffer from the disease of worldly obstacles in the eyes of a lover.

Swami Ji Maharaj says,

रुबरु आमिलाने-बातिन फहम। आलिमाँ इल्मे-जाहिरी जाहिल।।

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (21:3:14, पृ० 185)

In the eyes of a devotee who goes up to the spiritual regions, people who have only intellect and knowledge are considered to be ignorant.

सहस सिआणपा लख होहि त इक न चलै नालि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी मं 1, पृ० 1)

Hundreds of thousands of clever acts and intellectual acrobatics are responsible for our ties to this world. And not one of them is the least bit of help to us in meeting the Lord. (Jap Ji)

Love is not to be found in self-appraisal, nor in knowledge or pages of books. The kind of love that is commonly understood by the world has nothing to do with the path of real lovers. True lovers give up the limited knowledge inherent in man and become free from greed and avarice. Real lovers, who have fully imbibed the effects of love, say that they have passed thousands of miles beyond the dirt of worldly knowledge and the intellect.

सद हजारां पाया अज दीवानगी बगुजस्ता एम,

चूं तू अफलातूने-अक्ली-रौ तुरा बा मा चिह कार ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 151)

True lovers say that you may be as learned as Socrates, but we will have nothing to do with you. Your path is different, and you must go your own way. Our path is the Name of God and we cannot join hands with you. (Shams-i-Tabrez)

आंजाए किह इश्क आमद जां रा चिह महल बाशद,

हर अकल कुजा पर्द आंजा किह जुनुं बाशद ।

सीमुर्गे-दिले-आशिक दर दाम कुजा गुंजद,

परवाजे-चुर्नी मुर्गे अज कौन बिरुं बाशद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 100)

Without the help and guidance of a Master, the soul is unable to reach the goal of love. Limited knowledge and intellect alone cannot reach the place where only ecstasy and madness of love can go. The heart of a lover cannot be trapped by the net of the body and physical attractions, because it has already reached a place which is nameless, limitless and beyond the reach of matter. (Shams-i-Tabrez)

The souls of such lovers of God find His Abode in the spiritual regions, far above, where the Negative Power and Illusion do not exist and cannot ensnare them into their net. Swami Ji Maharaj says,

गुरु आदि पुरुष जग आये। सब हंस जीव चेताये ॥

कौवों से दूर रहाये। निज प्रेमी खँच बुलाये ॥

तब काल करम मुरझाये। माया भी सिर धुन रही पछताये।

गुरु अगम देश अब दीन्हा। मैं कहाँ लग बरनूं महिमा ॥

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (41:10:9-12, पृ० 371-72)

Masters came into this world and awakened the swan-like souls of their devotees.

They have kept them aloof from the crows. They have the power of attracting lovers towards themselves, and towards such lovers, the Negative Power becomes helpless.

The Masters have given us an Abode which is indescribable. I am unable to praise its greatness.

Hafiz also says,

बिरो ई दाम रा जाए दिगर

ना, किह अनका रा बलंदस्त आशियाना।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 367)

O, Negative Power, be gone! You should spread your net somewhere else, because my home is now much higher.

A Master is the King of lovers of God. He has pitchers full of the Elixir of Spirituality for releasing people from the bonds of limited knowledge and the intellect. Whenever a person of high attainments – be he a philosopher like Socrates or a physician like Luqman – comes to the Master in search of Truth, the Master makes him as innocent as a child by giving him a glimpse of Himself, full of the light of Spiritual Knowledge, and He fills such a one with the currents of the intoxication of love. Then all limited knowledge and argument is destroyed, and the mind is no longer confused.

वर तू अफलातून ओ लुकमानी ब-इल्म, मन बसक दीदार नादानत कुनम।

मन हुमायम साया साज़म बर सरत, ता किह अफरीदून ओ सुलतानत कुनम।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 214)

A Master is like the Huma bird. On whomever His shadow falls, even the lowliest of the low becomes a spiritual king. (Shams-i-Tabrez)

The limitations of knowledge, as this world knows it, are the foundation of all our worries. Under the influence of the intellect, one is always drowned in mental worries and whirlpools of thoughts to such an extent that the heart becomes practically lifeless. A cold heart does not have the ability to love, for which a warm heart is essential. Shams-i-Tabrez says,

दर इश्क जिंदा बायद कज़ मुर्दा हेच नायद,
दानी किह चीस्त जिंदा आं कू जि इश्क ज़ायद।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 139)

Man receives life energy by plunging into love. A heart which does not possess life and energy cannot reach the gates of love. Who is alive? Only those who have been born into love. If the current of love is blown into dead hearts, even they will receive life forever, and such a heart never dies.

It is necessary for a lover to have a beloved. Love is entirely dependent upon this essential factor. In the religion of lovers, it is considered sacrilegious to be away from the Beloved even for a single moment.

Love is another name for attaching the heart to the Beloved. It is not a child's play. Only those of sterling worth, who are free from the ties of the world, and who are fearless, can become lovers. It is the work of one, who is free from all worldly desires, and who is able to keep his mind clear of the dirt of duality. When the leaven of love begins to act, then a lover cannot turn his attention towards any object except the Beloved. He will have nothing to do with anybody except his own Beloved – the Master. His heart does not jump from one branch of the world to another. He remains absorbed in the love of his Master by freeing himself from all other thoughts.

बाज़ ई दिले-सरमस्तम शोरीदाए आं बंद अस्त,
दीवाना कसे बाशद किह बेदिल अस्त।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़

He is tied to the apron strings of his Master, and in such a state, the wings of intellect and worry cannot flutter. (Shams-i-Tabrez)

Love is the most effective means of taking one to his Beloved. There is no comparison between lovers and people, who are steeped in the limitations of the intellect. The intellect cannot reach up to the condition of love.

Khwaja Farid-ud-din Attar has very aptly compared love with finite knowledge and has described the influence of both of them in the following words:

इश्क़ चिह्न बुवद कतरा दरया साख़्तन,
 किबला अज़ दो आलम बा खुदा परदाख़्तन ।
 इश्क़ आं बाशद किह्न बातिल हक्क़ शवद,
 किबला रा बगुज़ारद ओ मुतलक़ शवद ।
 इश्क़ अज़ हस्ती-ए-खुद वारुस्तन अस्त,
 दर मक़ामे-सरमदी पैवस्तन असत ।
 अक्ल दर अस्बाब मीदारद नज़र,
 इश्क़ मीगोयद मुसब्बिब रा निगर ।
 अक्ल गोयद दुनिया ओ उक़बा बज़ू,
 इश्क़ मीगोयद बज़ुज़ मौला मजू ।
 अक्ल मीगोयद बियामूज़ इल्म बेश,
 इश्क़ मीगोयद किह्न कुन तू तर्क-ख़वेश ।
 अक्ल गोयद शादी ओ मरहम तलब,
 इश्क़ गोयद दर्दो-सोज़ो-ग़म तलब ।
 हक्क़ जहां रा अज़ महब्बत आफ़रीद,
 अज़ महब्बत हर दो आलम शुद पदीद ।

-- ख़्वाजा फ़रीदुद्दीन अत्तार

What does love accomplish? It causes the drop to become an ocean, the soul to merge into the Lord, and the lover to become oblivious of the two worlds. Love is an experience through which the soul awakens into the Lord and becomes free from all attachments and worldly ties.

It is another name for the annihilation of one's ego and for union with God. The knowledge of a person, which is limited, can see only the superficial causes, but love calls out, Do not lay eyes on these superficial causes.

The human intellect says that one should search for good in this world and the next, but love says, Do not search for anything except God. Man's limited knowledge compels him to achieve

worldly status and to make material progress, but love teaches one to efface even one's own self.

Intellect wants us to search for the remedy of all ills and to experience all pleasures, but love orders us to seek the pain of separation. God has created this world and the next, out of love.

The way of finite knowledge and the way of love are different. The former scatters one through the desires of the mind, while the latter teaches one to concentrate on one object only. The former asks you to see the world and fill your mind with the different kinds of knowledge that exist in the world; but the latter says that the Beloved is the fountain of all knowledge, and that you should dance attendance in the lane of love and concentrate on Him within yourself. The former persuades you to associate with your friends and companions; but the latter warns you to remain away from friends who would lead you astray from your Beloved. Intellect goads you to achieve a high status in this world and to become a leader of your country or creed; but love says, Sit in a lonely corner and be happy in the remembrance of the Lord of all regions. Limited knowledge asks you to acquire intellectual superiority and proficiency in the arts; but love wishes only to take you on the path where the soul is truly enraptured in Divine Ecstasy. The human intellect considers it impossible to meet and see the Lord, because intellect is limited. But love beholds to its heart's content, His manifestation in both the worlds. Due to their limited knowledge, the majority of the people do not believe that there could be a Living Master in the world today. But love says, You should remove the bandage of ignorance and selfishness from your eyes. Then only will you see not one, but many Perfect Masters. It is due to our own faulty mind and intellect that we fail to meet a Perfect Master. Intellect believes that comfort and happiness in this world are entirely due to wealth. But love says that real happiness is in concentration and stability of heart, and one should not run after the worthless treasures of the world. The human intellect goads us to remain in comfort and to pamper ourselves; but

love says, Sacrifice your head and your dear life to your Beloved. At most, the intellect will take you to the pleasures of heaven. But love says that to ask for anything except the Beloved, or to desire anything else, is the cause of misery, pain and sorrow. Therefore, one should never desire anything else. Ordinary mortals consider lovers to be mad and call in physicians to diagnose their ailment; but the lover says that he is active and intelligent through the help of his Master, and prays to his Beloved to remove the limited understanding of the ordinary mortals, O my Beloved! Please take them out of this darkness of ignorance.

Does this mean that knowledge and intellect have no merit? All Saints and holy men teach the people of the world through their discourses. They differentiate between truth and untruth by intellectual reasoning. If that is the case, then how is it that knowledge described above is depicted in such disparaging terms?

Limited knowledge cannot see beyond the physical self and keeps one devoid of love for the Beloved. A man may be very learned and also highly intellectual, but he cannot reach the gate of the Beloved by mere learning. So long as he does not merge himself in the Lord, who is all love, he cannot be successful, and his intellect will beguile him towards the wrong path. If, however, knowledge is used without the negative influence of the intellect, then it can be free from its limitations and dross. Otherwise, one will always remain submerged in sensual pleasures. But one can have communion with God, who is omniscient, if the mind and senses are under the control of knowledge. Such a state can be achieved only by one who is guided by a Living Master. Then he really meets his Beloved.

Hazrat Mohammed says,

One small particle of such a knowledge – knowledge of virtue and of a Master – is better than fasting and prayers. A person who has this type of knowledge is my life, and his soul would give its fragrance to my life. But those who are without this type

of intellect are fools. You should keep away from them, because it is fools of this kind who are responsible for so much bloodshed. You should endeavour to make your intellect One with His. Then your mind will no longer be scattered and, through concentration, you will be able to know the inner secrets of God.

A man should not be guided by his limited knowledge, but should seek guidance from the All-Wise, because his limited knowledge is the cause of his perverted intellect. The All-Wise is capable of giving true Light. Limited knowledge keeps one scattered in the darkness and entangled in worldly activities, and like a snake or a scorpion continually injects into him the poison of Illusion.

A human being is superior to a beast because his intellect is capable of discerning between good and evil. This power of discernment is essential for every human being, because through it he can clearly distinguish the difference between Truth and untruth. Guru Nanak says,

ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਵੇਚਹਿ ਨਾਭ ॥

ਖੇਤੀ ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਉਝੜੈ ਖਲਵਾੜੈ ਕਿਆ ਥਾਭ ॥

-- ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ (ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮੰ 1, ਪੰ 1245)

Cursed are the lives of those, who read and write the Lord's Name in order to sell it. Their crop is devastated – what harvest will that have?

No one can reach the Court of the Lord without true and real effort. If we are destroying our knowledge in useless discussions and arguments, we cannot be called truly intelligent beings. We should contemplate and think of the Master with discrimination, because by this means alone can we achieve Grace in His court. We should carefully try to understand the meaning underlying the writings of wise and noble men and thoroughly consider them in all of their aspects. When convinced that the path of spirituality is the right path, only then should we follow it and in good faith. This is the only way to tread the path of God and spirituality.

Except for this, all other paths lead one towards the Negative Power.

सचौ सरमै बाहरे अगै लहहि न दादि ॥
 अकलि एह न आखीऐ अकलि गवाईऐ बादि ॥
 अकली साहिबु सेवीऐ अकली पाईऐ मानु ॥
 अकली पड़हि कै बुझीऐ अकली कीचै दानु ॥
 नानकु आखै राहु एहु होरि गलां सैतानु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग म० 1, पृ० 1245)

Lacking truth and humility, they shall not be appreciated in the world hereafter. Wisdom which leads to arguments is not wisdom. Wisdom leads one to serve our Lord; through wisdom, honour is obtained. Wisdom does not come by reading textbooks; wisdom inspires us to give in charity. Says Nanak, this is the right path; other things lead to Satan.

It is, however, necessary to develop love in order to achieve contact with the Truth and merge in it. The soul is a particle of God, and its inherent quality is love. Knowledge or learning is necessary only to be convinced that the path of spirituality is the one to follow. When one has been able to distinguish the difference between Truth and untruth, the need for knowledge no longer exists. Intellect is necessary only to help us in selecting the path, which will enable us to merge in the Truth.

Learning and intellect are our guides only in the beginning but after we are convinced which is the right path to follow, then we have to become one with it and to merge into it. This is possible only through love. If a person continues to be guided by intellect or learning alone, then these guides become a barrier.

Reasoning is the help and reasoning is the bar.

The soul is wrapped in four coverings of the individual mind:

- **Chitta** चित्त – Memory; inner attention;
- **Manas** मनस् – Mind; character, inclination;
- **Buddhi** बुद्धि – Intellect; power of discrimination;
- **Ahankar** अहंकार – The ego

Only after all these coverings are removed, does the soul become capable of beholding Him. The mind should

leave reasoning, and with it the intellect should also go. Then alone will our footsteps go towards spirituality. The Katha Upanishad says,

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।
बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति तामाहुः परमो गतिम् ॥

-- कठोपनिषद् (2:3:10)

The senses of knowledge and mind should be concentrated. Intellect should also stop working. In such a state alone, the highest spirituality is attained.

We should sacrifice our own entire learning in our love for the Beloved, because intellect is supported by love alone. Intellect is like the shadow, and God is the Sun. A shadow has no comparison with the sun.

Love and Beauty

Physical beauty is subject to destruction, but true love or real attraction never perishes. Beauty may perish, and even good works may cease. Graceful actions and attractive deportment may be no more, and even the beautiful face may vanish; but true love lives so long as the lover is alive. Even after his death love does not disappear, but merges into his soul. Physical beauty is temporary. It may be glamorous today and gone tomorrow. After youth and good health pass away beauty fades, but love remains forever.

Physical beauty rests on a weak foundation and is ephemeral. But love is the natural quality of the soul and is eternal. A life full of love enhances beauty, and beauty of this kind radiates soul force. Beauty of this type has a unique attraction, because it produces love. If beauty is not dyed with the attraction of soul force, love does not exist.

जहाँ हुस्न नहीं, इश्क भी पैदा नहीं होता,
बुलबुल गुले-दीवार पै शैदा नहीं होता ।

A nightingale loves only live flowers. It is not attracted by artificial flowers or by those painted on a wall or on a piece of paper.

Love never perishes, even if the bones of a lover are ground fine like powder. Just as the perfume of sandalwood

does not leave it, even if it is completely ground up, similarly the basis of love is the soul, and it is indestructible and therefore eternal. Beauty can be destroyed, but not love.

Wherever there is love, there must be beauty. Love brings joy and lustre to the eyes. The currents of love emanate from Saints and men of God. Their beauty is doubly enhanced. Their love is of the soul and not of the physical body. Such persons are handsome or beautiful, despite their colour or physical deficiencies. They have developed the inherent love of the soul, and their physical body is dyed deep in the spiritual colour, which reflects real inner beauty.

Love and Knowledge

The difference between knowledge and love is that knowledge continually tries to banish duality, but love retains it as a precious treasure and itself remains without duality. Love is a condition like that of one life and two bodies. A devotee is so absorbed in the love of the Lord, that he is not aware of any distinction between himself and the Lord. He does not see the Lord as a separate entity, but realizes that he and the Lord are one. Intellect cannot understand this, because it is one of the mysteries of spirituality and cannot be comprehended by intellect alone.

Shams-i-Tabrez says,

अजब मन शम्स तब्रेज्म किह् आशिक् गश्ता अम बर खुद,
चू खुद दर खुद नज़र करदम, नदीदम जुज़ खुदा दर खुद।

-- शम्स तब्रेज्

I am a stranger Shams-i-Tabriz, for I have become the lover of my own life; by looking within and worshipping within myself, I find God and nothing else.

Dadu says,

प्रीत जो मेरे पीव की, पैठी पिंजर माहिं।
रोम रोम पिउ पिउ करै,, दादू दूसर नाहिं।।

-- दादू दयाल की बानी भाग-1 (बिरह को अंग 134, पृ० 43)

The love for my Beloved has been so ingrained in my body that every cell cries out,

'O my Love, O my Love! Except for You there is no other'.

प्रीतम को पतियाँ लिखूँ, जो कहूँ होय बिदेस।

तन में मन में नैन में, ता को कहा सँदेस॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 70, पृ० 51)

The truth is that it is necessary to write love letters to the Beloved only if the Beloved is really at some distance, but when He is in the body, He is in the mind, and He is in the very life, how can one send messages to Him by means of letters? (Kabir)

People generally do not consider that knowledge and love are necessary for spiritual life, and they select either the path of love or that of knowledge, according to their inclination. There are others who consider the path of action to be the true path and therefore spend their life in doing good deeds for others. Actually, both knowledge and love should completely combine and manifest themselves in the form of good actions.

Love and knowledge awaken discernment in us, as a result of which, virtuous actions are performed spontaneously. Love and knowledge are really not two different paths, but the combination of these two is the very core of life. They are also the beauty of life and in their combination lies true life. They are the two sides of one Truth, the two wings of the same bird. If true knowledge is awakened or developed, the river of real love immediately begins to flow.

The heart is the haven of love. For the One, whom our intellect wishes to know by means of knowledge, our heart tries to feel true love. We can meet that One by means of knowledge, but real union can be attained only through love. Knowledge takes us up to that One, but love makes us merge into Him. Those who consider it sufficient to meet Him, cannot experience the ecstasy of merging into Him. There is no difference between love and true knowledge.

What is love? It is another name for dedicating one's affection. The Isha Upanishad says,

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्।

-- ईशावास्योपनिषद् (मन्त्र 1)

Whatever is in existence in this world is filled with God. You should therefore cover this world with the Name of God.

One has to surrender oneself to God. Then there is nothing but God. This is love. This is knowledge. You may think about this and you may even carefully discuss it, but you will not find any difference between true knowledge and love.

The heart is given away and it makes its centre in the Beloved and remains fixed there. This is true knowledge. Knowledge does not mean merely to understand or to know. It actually means to become that which we really are, i.e., to know ourselves. The Upanishad then continues:

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य सिद्धिम्॥

Whatever has been given by Him you should enjoy by renunciation. Do not be attached to it, and do not covet the wealth of another.

The highest type of love for the lover is to live in the Will of the Beloved. If we imbibe this quality, we attain true knowledge. Those who are entangled in desires and in greed cannot achieve true knowledge.

To know God, in other words, is to love Him and to merge into Him, to be filled with His unique beauty and to become one with Him.

Love and Detachment

Real detachment is not merely running away and leaving everything. Rather, it is that pure state of the mind in which all desires are burnt up by going beyond all attractions of the world. But without understanding, detachment is an impossibility. When such a state is combined with the longing to meet the Lord, it is called love. Therefore, love and detachment are not two different qualities. They are two separate names for the same state of mind.

One may be termed a devotee or a lover in proportion to the degree of his detachment. Those who do not possess love for God in their hearts, do not have even a particle of detachment. As the mind becomes free from desires, to that extent is it filled with love. One, who is steeped in attachment for

the world, cannot be a lover. You should bow before God by saying good-bye to worldly desires; otherwise the prayer is not genuine.

Detachment and true love are one and the same thing. So long as the mind does not have an aversion to worldly desires, it cannot attract love. No doubt, it has been noted that sometimes devotees, in the beginning, in spite of being detached, do ask God for material necessities. There is no harm in this, provided one is treading the spiritual path with the proper attitude and not for the fulfilment of any desire connected with the senses.

दुइ सेर मांगउ चूना॥ पाउ घीउ सगि लूना॥ अध सेरु मांगउ दाले॥

मो कउ दोनउ वखत जिवाले॥ खाट मांगउ चउपाई॥

सिरहाना अवर तुलाई॥ ऊपर कउ मांगउ खींधा॥

तेरी भगति करै जनु थींधा॥ मै नाही कीता लबो॥ इकु नाउ तेरा मै फबो॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ भगत कबीर, पृ० 656)

I need only the bare necessities of life; that is, wheat flour, a pinch of salt, a little pulse – as much as will keep me alive. Then I also need a bed, a pillow, a mattress and a blanket to protect me against the wind and cold. I do not want anything else except the privilege of being devoted to Thee with all humility. I have no other desires except Thy Name. (Kabir)

Actually, a detached devotee never seeks anything from the Lord. He asks for only Him, because everything else is transitory and is the cause of pain.

विणु तुधु होरु जि मंगणा सिरि दुखा कै दुख॥

दोहि नामु संतोखीआ उतरै मन की भुख॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 5, पृ० 958)

To ask for any other than You, Lord, is the ultimate of miseries. Please bless me with Your Name, and make me content; may the hunger of my mind thus be satisfied.

Such a devotee does not ask for anything from the Lord, because he does not feel the need. His pains, worries and prejudices are all destroyed. Whoever has tasted the elixir of love will not run after anything else, and whatever he says will be acceptable in the Court of the Lord. This means

that a devotee of this kind will not pay any attention to any material thing.

Love and Attachment

Love is not attachment. There is a vast difference between the two. In attachment one is entangled with his body, wife, children, relative, religion, caste and country. In other words, one has a feeling of indifference or estrangement regarding everything that is not related to his attachments. Attachment is finite, and a person in that state cannot be guided by real knowledge.

There is a strong feeling of selfishness connected with attachment. But in love one sees everything with the same eye – whether it is a human being or a beast. He loves all alike; in fact, he loves the entire creation.

The ideas of selfishness and of a limited sphere of interest enter into attachment, and to fulfil these ideas man may stoop to evil designs and actions. The result is misery and nothing else. Love is free from this dross. A lover loves all.

In attachment, one falls low. He cannot look at everything with a disinterested eye. The world of attachment is like a bargain counter, where one gives only in exchange for gain, otherwise he has nothing to give. Love knows only how to give.

A lover also knows that the true love, which is God, is within every creature. He loves everybody – the good and the bad – without any idea of gain. Love is the support of life. It is the giver of energy.

Love and Lust

Love is not the name of sensual desires, in which there is a preponderance of lust. True love cannot be found in everybody. Generally, people love with selfish motives. Love and sensual desires are two different things. There is a world of difference between them. One is a unique life-giving current, while the other is a filthy evil that drains life out of the body.

Lust is always for selfish gains. A lustful person tries to make the other person the object of the satisfaction of his desires. But true love aims at giving happiness and comfort to the beloved. Such a lover has the quality of enduring pain in order to give pleasure and happiness to the beloved, and is happy in the will of the beloved.

Love sacrifices body, mind, beauty, youth, intellect, wealth and even life at the altar of the Lord's temple. A lustful person is always restless and desires to keep the object of love with him. Lust is full of darkness. Love is full of light, like the sun. Lust is selfish, but love wishes to give even itself. Lust aims at self-gratification, but love is satisfied only when it sees others happy. Lust is like a dark whirlpool of agitation, but love is like a clear stream. Lust is like coal, but love has the value of a diamond.

Love gives away everything for the Beloved and is restless if the Beloved is not constantly in his mind. Lust causes the loss of all strength of mind and cannot concentrate on any one thing. Lust is limited and causes increasing debility and selfishness. It is the cause of trouble, hatred, dejection, peevishness, and restlessness of mind. A lustful person falls low in his own eyes, but a lover is free from all these evils and is able to detach his soul from the world. He actually makes love a spring-board for meeting the Lord.

The innate quality of a man is love. But this very power or current of love, if directed towards sensual desires, removes a person from the path leading to God-realization. This misdirected energy is termed lust. But when this very current of love forsakes the pleasures of the senses and is directed towards God, it becomes the True or Divine Love.

The difference between lust and devotion to God is only in the direction in which the current of love flows. Inayat Shah says,

रब्ब दा की पावणा । एधरों पुटणा ते ओधर लावणा ।

-- इनायत शाह

It is not difficult to realize God. One simply needs to unplant from here and plant it there.

For devotion to the Lord or His love, it is not sufficient merely to renounce the desires for sensual pleasures superficially. It is necessary to give them up sincerely and with a strong will; otherwise the current of love will not move towards God. It is essential to eliminate all desires of the senses from the mind. By not loving or dwelling on the outer pleasures the inner attraction of the soul will automatically awaken.

Love is the natural inclination of the soul. It is impossible to separate it from the soul. A lover seeks a True Master, and love is the means of placing a man at the feet of the Lord, in much the same manner as a worldly lover sacrifices himself for his beloved by forsaking his name, fame, etc.

The Lover

The status of an ordinary worshipper is better than that of person attached to the world. The former has meditated, has done good works, and has abstained from evil in order to find a place in heaven and to save himself from the fire of hell. But better than a worshipper, is a hermit who tries to avoid all evil actions and desires only communion with God. Such a one has sacrificed the world in his desire for heaven, and is engaged in the worship of God. And better than hermits is the status of lovers, who have ascended the steps towards the love of God and have forgotten this world and the next in their love for Him. They have no fear of hell and no desire for heaven. They want to travel only on the path on which the Beloved takes them.

दोड़ख से कुछ न काम न जन्नत से कुछ गरज,
जायेंगे हम उधर को जिधर यार ले चले।

We have no concern with hell; we have no desire for heaven. We shall go wherever our Beloved will take us.

Bu-Ali Qalandar says,

न तरसम जि आतिशे—दोड़ख न परवाए—जनां दारम,
मनम शोरीदा—ए—जानां न ख्वाहम हूरो—गिल्मां रा।

-- दीवाने-बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (गज़ल 4, पृ० 6-7)

Lovers of God are not afraid of the fires of hell, nor do they feel tempted towards heaven. They are the lovers of their Beloved. What should they do with the beauties of heaven?

Sheikh Sa'adi says,

मए—जामे—वहदत कसे नोश करद,
किह दुनिया ओ उकबा फ़रामोश करद ।

-- बोस्तान (पृ० 114)

Only he, who forgets this world and the next, is able to taste the Wine of Union with God.

An ordinary worshipper or hermit desires to go to heaven; but a lover desires only to see the rays of God's Light, for that is his heaven.

This world is really a prison house, and the world hereafter is the place of satisfaction of one's desires. A lover does not care to purchase either world even for a farthing.

Some people are overwhelmed by worldly troubles, and others are filled with desire for getting the pleasures of the world beyond. A lover is above both of them. He desires neither this nor that.

Sheikh Sa'adi says,

यके पेशे—शोरीदा हाले नबिश्त, किह दाज़ख तमन्ना कुनी या बहिश्त ।
बगुप्ता मपुरस अज़ मन ई माजरा, पसंदीदम अंचिह ऊ पसंदद मरा ।

-- बोस्तान (पृ० 124)

Once a lover was asked if he wanted hell or heaven. He replied, 'Do not ask me anything about them. I want only that which my God wishes for me'.

The aim of a hermit is heaven. A lover wants only the Lord. Consequently, there is a vast difference between the two. An ascetic is happy in his austerities and rituals, but a lover is absorbed only in the experiences of love.

Hazrat Mohammed says,

अदुनिया हराम अला अहलिल आखिरत वलआखिरत हराम अला
अहलिलदुनिया व हुमा हराम अला अहलिलाहि ।

-- कुरान

This world is not attractive to those who have the aim of achieving the world beyond; the world beyond is not attractive to those

engrossed in worldly pleasures; and both, this world and the next, are not attractive to the lovers of God.

The same idea has been expressed by Muin-ud-din Abdul Qadir Jilani. He says,

मन अरादुल आखिरत फ़अलैहि बिलजुहदि फी अल-दुनिया
व मन अरादहा फ़अलैहि बिलजुहदि कफ़ल आखिरति ।

— मुइनुद्दीन अब्दुल कादिर जीलानी

If a person wishes to reach heaven and enjoy its pleasures, he should turn his attention away from worldly objects and desires. But if a person desires only nearness and communion with God, he should turn his mind away from the desire for heaven.

Hence, one should forget this world, in order to get to the world beyond; and he should forget the world beyond, in order to divert his attention towards God. One, whose mind is happy in the remembrance of God, cannot be satisfied with anything else. A hermit has his mind fixed on the desire for heaven. He may be living in this world, but he is not a man of the world. Similarly, a devotee of the Lord may talk about the world beyond, but he is above both, this world and the next. He is always absorbed in remembrance of the Lord and has a constant desire for His Darshan. He has no attachment or desire for the beautiful things of this world, such as gardens, palaces, etc. Hazrat Shah Niyaz Ahmed says,

जुहद ओ तक्वा दर फ़िगंदम ज़ेर पाए आं सनम,
मज़हबम इश्क़स्त ओ रिंदी मशरबम जोशो-ख़रोश ।
ज़ाहिदा बिशिनौ खुदा रा आंचिह् मीगोयम तुरा,
जुहदे-बेमअनी गुज़ार ओ जामे-इश्क़ अज़ मन बिनोश ।

— दीवाने-निराज़ बरेलवी (पृ० 26)

I have sacrificed the austerities of this world, my meditation, etc., at the Lotus Feet of my God. My religion is love for Him, and to be intoxicated in that bliss. I keep myself dyed in the colour of His love. O, you ascetic! Please listen to me in the name of my God! You should discontinue your austerities and rituals, and instead should drink the Cup of Wine of the Love of God. The intoxication from that bliss is much more exhilarating than any other intoxication. You cannot find such a bliss anywhere else.

Lovers do not believe in salvation by means of reading Scriptures alone. They read only the Scripture of love. A lover is indifferent to outward praise and talk of his Beloved. His only desire is to merge in Him. A Faqir says,

बस बस किताबां नूं ठप्प मुल्लौं, कोई इश्क दा सबक पढ़ा सानूं।

असीं रज्ज लत्थे इन्हां गुड्डिआँ तों, सूरत यार दी असल दिखा सानूं।

O my Teacher! Please close all the books and teach me a lesson of love. As I have completed this course, now you should show me the face of my Beloved.

Shah Niyaz Ahmad says,

यक हरफ़ जि इश्क़ खुद सबक़ दिह, ख़ानम किससो—किताब ता कै।

-- दीवाने-नियाज़ बरेलवी (पृ० 80)

O my Lord! Teach us the One word of your love. I do not wish to waste my life in reading stories about you.

Hafiz Sahib has also described the same idea in beautiful words:

ई ख़िरक़ा किह मन दारम दर रहने—शराब—ऊला,

वीं दफ़्तरे—बे—मअनी गरके—मए—नाब—ऊला।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 382)

This austerity and ritual, whose covering I placed over me, have now been pawned for a cup of the Wine of my God's Love. Detachment and sacrifice are useless. I have drowned them in the pure wine of the love of my God.

Hafiz Farid-ud-din Attar says,

कुफ़्र काफ़िर रा ओ दी दीदार रा, ज़राए—दर्दे—दिले—अत्तार रा।

-- मंतिक-उल-तैर (पृ० 15)

An atheist and a man of the religion of the world may be happy in his atheism and in his religion, respectively, but, O my Lord! grant my heart a particle of the pain of longing for you.

Hazrat Mohammed says,

People of the world are like eunuchs; people who desire the world beyond are like women; but those who want only the Lord are real men.

This shows that the status of a lover is the highest of all. The description of the rituals and austerities by which one can gain heaven is given in religious scriptures. But the

description of love is confined in the hearts of lovers alone. It cannot be described in any language.

Lover is the name of one, who has sacrificed his heart. Shams-i-Tabriz says,

दिल-दादा आं बाशद किह् ऊ दर कुचा-ए-यारे खद,
नै चुं तू गोशा कुस्ता दर गोशाए-उफ़तादाए ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 318)

The giving away of one's heart means that the lover should go straight to the Beloved and should not conceal himself in any corner.

Who is a true lover? One who has cleansed himself from the dirt of all worldly thoughts and desires by burning them in the fire of devotion and separation. His mind is always restless to meet the Lord, just as thirst makes a man restless for water. The lover's mind and body have been pierced by the arrow of God's love. His real friend and Beloved is none other than God Almighty.

हरि दरसन कउ मेरा मनु बहु तपतै जिउ तृखावंतु बिनु नीर ॥
मेरै मनि प्रेमु लगो हरि तीर ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गोंड म० 4, पृ० 861)

My mind is restless without the sight of my Lord, just as a thirsty person is restless without water. My mind is pierced through by the arrow of the Lord's Love.

मेरै मनि तनि वडड़ी गोविंद प्रभ आसा जीउ ॥
हरि मेलहु संत जीउ गोविंद प्रभ पासा जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी माझ म० 4, पृ० 175)

My mind has been pierced through by the arrow of the Name of God, and no one now resides in my heart except my Lord. Within my mind and body, there is a great longing the Lord of the Universe. Unite me with the Lord, dear Saints. God, the Lord of the Universe, is so close to me.

A lover's attention is withdrawn automatically from this world and the next, and is fixed only in the Lotus Feet of God.

साची प्रीति हम तुम सिउ जोरी ॥ तुम सिउ जोरि अवर संगि तोरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ भगत रविदास, पृ० 659)

I have given my true love to you by breaking away from all others. My love has now been fixed in your Lotus Feet because this is the true, complete and pure aim. (Ravidas)

नीहु महिंजा तरु नालि बिआ नेह कूड़ावे डेखु ॥
कपड़ भोग डरावणे जिचरु पिरी न डेखु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 5, पृ० 1094)

I am in love with You, O Lord. I have seen that the other love is false. Even the pleasures of clothes and food are frightening to me, as long as do not see my Beloved.

Guru Amar Das says,

जिचरु अंदरि सासु तिचरु सेवा कीचौ जाइ मिलीऐ राम मुरारी ॥
अनदिनु जागत रहै दिनु राती अपने प्रिअ प्रीति पिआरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 911)

So long as a lover breathes, she seeks the Lord and tries hard to meet her dear Beloved. She remains awake and aware, day and night; she is the darling bride of her Beloved Husband Lord.

The happiness which a lover gets by meeting his Beloved cannot be described in any language. Guru Ram Das says,

अंदरि सचा नेहु लाइआ प्रीतम आपणै ॥
तनु मनु होइ निहालु जा गुरु देखा साम्हणे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 758)

When a person has imbibed true love for his Beloved Master, his mind and body both become cheerful by meeting Him, for a Master who is a manifestation of God has a strong and true attraction for the heart.

राम गुरि मोहनि मोहि मनु लईआ ॥

हउ आकल बिकल भई गुर देखे हउ लोट पोट होइ पईआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 836)

By having a glimpse of the light of His beauty, one forgets his own self. Such a lover is fully absorbed in that bliss.

अखी प्रेमि कसाईआ हरि हरि नामु पिखन्हि ॥

जे करि दूजा देखदे जन नानक कढि दिचन्हि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा की वार म० 4, पृ० 1318)

The eyes of a lover are always drenched in love, and they see only God and God's Name. The eyes that see anything else except God should be discarded.

Paltu has also described the state of a lover, saying:

अम्मा मेरा दिल लगा मुझ से रहा न जाय ॥

मुझ से रहा न जाय बिना साहिब को देखे ॥

जान तसहुक करौं लगै साहिब के लेखे ॥

मुझ को भया है रोग जायगा जीव हमारा ।
 एकर दारु यही मिलै जो प्रीतम प्यारा ॥
 पड़ा प्रेम जंजाल ज़िकिर सीने में लागी ।
 मैं गिरि परी बेहोस लोक की लज्जा भागी ॥
 पलटू सतगुरु बैद बिन कौन सकै समझाय ।
 अम्मा मेरा दिल लगा मुझ से रहा न जाय ॥

-- पलटू साहिब की बानी भाग-1 (कुण्डली 63, पृ० 25)

O my mother! My heart has been so completely given away to my Beloved that

I cannot live without the darshan of the sahib. I am prepared to sacrifice my life for the sake of my Beloved.

This is my ailment and it will cost me my life. There's only one remedy, and that is that my Beloved should meet me.

The snare of love has captured my heart and I have become senseless and indifferent to everything about me.

O Paltu, who can teach us the way without a real physician in the form of my Master! O my mother! I have given my heart away and I am restless.

Love is a burning fire into which, everybody cannot leap. That can be done only by a rare lover. Hafiz was so intoxicated by this fire that he cried out:

अला या अय्युहा अल—साकी अदिर कासा व नाविलहा,
 किह इश्क आसान नमूद अव्वल वले उफ़ताद मुश्किलहा ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 29)

Yes, my Master! Let the passing round of the cup filled with the wine of God's love continue. In the beginning this love appeared to be easy, but it has now become very difficult. O my Master! Please be kind and show me the path by which the real Light of my Beloved can be seen in God's Truth, for there is no remedy for the pain of love except meeting the Beloved and drinking that wine.

Love appears to be a child's play in the beginning, but it is full of many dangers. To follow this path is not the work of an ordinary person, who is given to greed and other worldly temptations. A crop destroyed by water-logging can be revived only by judicious watering. Similarly, the pain of love is removed only by the ecstasy of love. Therefore, we have to pray before our Master, begging Him to take us to

the world, where we may be free from sin, where we will be free from all anxieties and ties with this world and the next.

We should remember that we are talking about true love – a love that is not to be found in the satisfaction of the senses or in sensual pleasure. Maulana Rumi says,

ई न इश्क अस्त आं किह् दर मर्दुम बुवद, ई फ़साद अज़ खुर्दने-गंदुम बुवद ।

-- मौलाना रूमी

This is not the love which is generally experienced in this world, and brought about the luxurious living and rich food. Here love means attraction for God, which is the true purpose of human life.

A beloved is loved by the lover, and the lover longs for the beloved. He is the worshipper of his beloved and does not turn his eyes towards anybody else. He is always thirsty for the sight of his Beloved and he cannot live without his beloved even for a single moment. You may give him wealth and all other valuable things of the world, but his hunger or longing will not be satisfied, except by meeting his beloved. Love for his beloved is in every cell of his body and his mind. He cannot be sustained by anything, other than the sight of his beloved.

पिर भावै प्रेमु सखाई ।।

तिसु बिनु घड़ी नही जगि जीवा ऐसी पिआस तिसाई ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार मं 1, पृ० 1273)

Whatever pleases the Lord brings happiness to the lover. Just as a thirsty man cannot live without water; similarly, the lover cannot live without the Lord even for a moment.

मेरै अंतरि भुख न उतरै अमाली जे सउ भोजन मै नीरे ।।

मेरै मनि तनि प्रेमु पिरम का बिनु दरसन किउ मनु धीरे ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस मं 5, पृ० 564)

O my mother! I have no appetite even if you should put all kinds of delicious and tempting food before me. Nothing can sustain my mind except the Darshan of my Beloved.

He prays for the sight of the Beloved. He even goes so far as to taunt the Beloved and says,

जे तू मित्रु असाडड़ा हक भोरी ना वेछोड़ि ।।

जीउ महिजा तउ मोहिआ कदि परी जानी तोहि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार मं 5, पृ० 1094)

O my Beloved! If you are really my true Beloved, then do not separate yourself from me even for a single moment. My soul is fascinated and enticed by You; when will I meet You, O my Love?

डिठी हभ ढंढोलि हिकसु बाझु न कोइ ॥

आउ सजण तू मुखि लगु मेरा तनु मनु ठंढा होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 5, पृ० 1100)

I have seen and examined all the world; without the One Lord, there is none like You. Come and show me Your face, O my friend, so that my body and mind may be calmed and soothed.

तू चउ सजण मैडिआ डेई सिसु उतारि ॥

नैण महिजे तरसदे कदि पसी दीदारु ॥

नीहु महिंजा तरु नालि बिआ नेह कूड़ावे डेखु ॥

कपड़ भोग डरावणे जिचरु पिरी न डेखु ॥

उठी झालू कंतड़े हउ पसी तउ दीदारु ॥

काजलु हारु तमोल रसु बिनु पसे हभि रस छारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 5, पृ० 1094)

You are the only friend in this world. I place my head at your door. My eyes are longing for your Darshan. When shall I have Your Darshan?

I am in love with You; I have seen that other love is false. Even clothes and food are frightening to me, as long as I do not see my Beloved.

I rise early, my Husband-Lord for your Darshan. Without Your Darshan, decorations of the body – eye make-up, garland of flowers, and all pleasures – the flavour of betel leaf, are all useless.

A lover is steeped in the love of the Beloved. Where else can he go? Fish cannot bear separation from water and will die without it. The life of a lover is in the Beloved. Without Him, he is dead. Guru Arjan says,

मन मेरे हरि के चरन रवीजै ॥

दरस पिआस मेरो मनु मोहिओ हरि पंख लगाइ मिलीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मत्तार म० 5, पृ० 1269)

O my mind! Merge yourself in the Lotus Feet of God, for I am becoming restless and thirsty without His Darshan. O my Beloved! How I wish that I might have wings so that I could fly up and be near You.

Guru Ram Das says,

जिना पिरी पिआरु किउ जीवनि परि बाहरे ॥
 जां सहु देखनि आपणा नानक थीवनि भी हरे ॥
 जिना गुरमुखि अंदरि नेहु तै प्रीतम सचौ लाइआ ॥
 राती अतै डेहु नानक प्रेमि समाइआ ॥
 गुरमुखि सची आसकी जितु प्रीतमु सचा पाईऐ ॥
 अनदिनु रहहि अनंदि नानक सहजि समाईऐ ॥
 सचा प्रेम पिआरु गुर पूरे ते पाईऐ ॥
 कबहू न होवै भंगु नानक हरि गुण गाईऐ ॥
 जिन्हा अंदरि सचा नेहु किउ जीवन्हि पिरी विहूणिआ ॥
 गुरमुखि मेले आपि नानक चिरी विछुनिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 4, पृ० 1422)

Those who are in love with their Beloved—how can they live without Him? When they see their Husband Lord, O Nanak, they are rejuvenated. Those Gurumukhs who are filled with love for You, my True Beloved. O Nanak, remain immersed in the Lord's Love, night and day. The love of the Gurumukh is true; through it, the True Beloved is attained. Night and day, remain in bliss, O Nanak, immersed in intuitive peace and poise. True love and affection are obtained from the Perfect Guru. They never break, O Nanak, if one sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord. How can those who have true love within them live without their Husband Lord? The Lord unites the Gurmukhs with Himself, O Nanak, they were separated from Him for such a long time.

Guru Nanak has drawn a beautiful picture of the state of mind of a lover:

साजन देसि विदेसीअड़े सानेहड़े देदी ॥
 सारि समाले तनि सजणा मुंघ नैण भरेदी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तुखारी म० 1, पृ० 1111)

O Friend, You have travelled so far from Your homeland, I send my message of love to You. I cherish and remember that Friend; the eyes of this soul-bride are filled with tears.

A real lover does not see anything, except true love. Love is his home, his wealth, his religion and his belief. He is a worshipper of love. He regards places of worship that are filled with worldly activity as being completely empty of love. Love can live only in the place of love, where there is

nothing else. Bulleh Shah once uttered the following words expressing these thoughts:

बुल्लिया धरमसाल धड़वाई रहिंदे, ठाकुर दुआरे ठग ।

विच मसीतां कोसते रहिंदे, आशक रहैण अलग ॥

-- कुल्लियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 366)

In a Dharamshala (a temple inn) live cheats. In temples one finds robbers. Swindlers are to be found in mosques. But lovers of God remain aloof.

The path of a lover is different from the path followed by others. The sky of love's land is also something different. Love is the pilgrimage of lovers. If places of pilgrimage and worship are devoid of love, then they are useless.

Lovers do not hate anyone. In their eyes there is nothing but love and more love. They seek love and their thoughts are always concentrated on their Beloved. It is there that they pray and bow their heads. Where does their Beloved live? The reply is: everywhere, in each one of us. God is love and love is another name for God. He is in everything and His current is flowing everywhere.

Love is the form of God, just as God is the form of love. Both of them live as one, like the sun and the sunshine.

When love completely fills a person, the limited desires of that lover's ego are destroyed, and he lives in the boundless love of the Lord. He does not find pleasure in anything of this world that can compare with his attachment for Him. To a lover, the wealth of love makes him look upon all the treasures of the world as mere nothing. He is prepared to sacrifice everything for his Beloved, including his religion, this world and the next. Hafiz says,

अगर आं तुर्क-शीराजी बदस्त आरद दिले-मा रा,

बखाले-हिन्दुवश बखश्म समरकंदो-बुखारा रा ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 30)

If my Master should give me the power to control my mind, then would I be prepared to sacrifice this world and the next, even for the one black mole on His face.

The Religion and Faith of Love

The religion of a lover is nothing but love, under the influence of which, a unique type of concentration and a feeling of loneliness enter his mind. His thoughts pass beyond the limit of union and duality. If one imbibes even a small particle of love, he will consider the whole world worth no more than a straw. The heart of one who has tasted even a few drops from the cup of love, finds no taste at all in the worldly pleasures. He desires neither heaven nor salvation.

Paltu Sahib says,

संत न चाहैं मुक्ति को नहीं पदारथ चार ॥
 नहीं पदारथ चार मुक्ति संतन की चेरी ।
 ऋद्धि सिद्धि पर थुक्कै स्वर्ग की आस न हेरी ॥
 तीरथ करहिं न बर्त नहीं कछु मन में इच्छा ।
 पुन्य तेज परताप संत को लगै अनिच्छा ॥
 ना चाहैं बैकुंठ न आवागवन निवारा ।
 सात स्वर्ग अपबर्ग तुच्छ सम ताहि बिचारा ॥
 पलटू चाहै हरि भगति ऐसा मता हमार ।
 संत न चाहैं मुक्ति को नहीं पदारथ चार ॥

-- पलटू साहिब की बानी भाग-1 (कुण्डली 57, पृ० 22)

Saints do not want salvation.

They have no desire for the four treasures of the world, because their desire is neither for the treasures of the world nor for salvation. They spurn supernatural powers, and they run away from the seat of heaven.

They do not go on pilgrimage; they do not fast; they have no desires in their mind. Even good actions have no attraction for them. They do not want heaven, nor are they interested in coming into and going from this world. They consider even the heavens no better than a piece of straw.

The devotees of God have such a desire, O Paltu! Neither do they want salvation, nor do they desire the four treasures of the world.

God lives in His own latent state of love, and a lover frees himself from the bondage of body and life and becomes a form of God. When the fire of love is kindled within a lover, it destroys everything, except the Beloved.

Love is such a strong current that a glimpse of the Light of the Beloved attracts the lover. When it plants the deep-rooted bliss of intoxication in a lover, the heart and the life are then automatically sacrificed for the Beloved. Knowledge, intellect, fame and reasoning or discussions are all swept away in the fast-running currents of love. In fact, whenever someone tastes even a few drops from the cup of love, his intellect and his worries all vanish. A lover sacrifices everything for his Beloved. His belief, religion and life are all given to his Beloved, and he forgets everything in his love. He cries out and exclaims with very great joy:

I am now a slave of my love, and free from the worries of both the worlds.

A lover is dyed in the hue of God's love. His talk is the talk of the Lord, and he is emancipated from all the sensual pleasures. Jaami Sahib says,

बंदा-ए-इश्क़ शुदी तर्क नसब कुन जामी किह् दरिं राहे-फुलां
इब्ने-फुलां चीज़े नीस्त ।

-- जामी

Now that you have become a slave of love, you should abandon your ideas of the fame and the superiority of your caste and family, because these have no merit on this path.

A lover, who is intoxicated in the love of his Beloved, lives only in thoughts about Him. He has no connection with the good or the evil of this world.

Hafiz Sahib says,

बागे-बहिश्त ओ साया-ए-तूबा ओ कसरो-हूर,
बा खाके-कूए-यार बराबर नमी कुनम ।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 330)

For a lover, the feet of the Beloved (Master) are the feet of God. He considers the gardens of heaven, the beautiful trees there, and the palaces with beautiful women in heaven as being no better than a particle of the dust of His lane.

The power of love becomes very strongly attractive within a lover. His sole desire is to meet the Beloved. It is said that, even if the home of the Beloved were in the centre of the ocean, or if the path to it were beset by hundreds

of snakes and even ferocious tigers and lions might be roaring in his way, and the angels of death were also trying to obstruct the way, even then, a lover would not be deterred from walking on the path of his Beloved. Nothing can deter him from going to his Beloved, because his world exists only for the Beloved. Hafiz Sahib says.

हाफिज़ा गर आशिको—मस्ती दिगर रह बाज़ गो,
आशिके—यारम मरा बा कुफ़्र ओ बा ईमां चिह कार।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 233)

*Nothing can enter my mind except the thought of my Beloved.
Give both the worlds to my enemies, because for me my Beloved
is all that I want.*

There is no room in the heart of a lover for anything, except the Beloved, and he always wishes to be in constant contact with Him. Kabir says,

कबीर रेख सिंदूर अरु, काजर दिया न जाय।
नैनन प्रीतम रमि रहा, दूजा कहाँ समाय।।
आठ पहर चौंसठ घड़ी, मेरे और न कोय।
नैना माहिं तू बसै, नींद को ठौर न होय।।
पतिबरता तब जानिये, रतिउ न उधरै नैन।
अंतरगत सकुची रहै, बोलै मधुरे बैन।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (पतिव्रता का अंग 25,26,28, पृ० 30)

*My Beloved is in my eyes like a thin coating of collyrium. How
can there be any place for sleep in my eyes when He is there
all the twenty-four hours and there is no other work except to
remember Him. The true and faithful wife is she who does not
keep her husband away from her eyes even for a single moment
and does not look at any other person. She closes her eyes and is
plunged deep into his remembrance, and in the remembrance of
love, she blossoms like a rose and speaks only of the sweetness of
love.*

Such devotees of the Lord always speak of Him with love and devotion. And when they speak, their throat is choked with love, their hair stand on end with the strong current of their love, and pearls of tear-drops flow from their eyes. If the Beloved is by their side, then they beg for longer nights in order to be with the Beloved for a longer period. Such a

lover feels that the state of intense concentration will come to an end, if the night were to end sooner. Therefore he prays for the nights to be long and that they should never end, so that he may not be separated from his Beloved. He desires to sleep less, so that he may not be away from his Beloved. The family into which such lovers are born, is worthy of all praise. As soon as the mind of a lover concentrates, he imbibes the qualities of God and becomes a master of many extraordinary powers. The mind of a lover is strong and deep like that of an ocean. It does not contain tempests of other thoughts. His aim is one-pointed and there is only one thought in his mind – that of the Beloved. When we love, then love becomes the sustainer of our soul, and our complete attention is concentrated in the Beloved. Then all superficial ties are cut, and the soul is freed from the shackles of this world and flies to the regions above. That highest region is its true abode.

Swami Ji Maharaj says,

तेरा धाम अधर में प्यारी, क्यों धर संग बंधानी ॥

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (20:19:7, पृ० 165)

Your abode is there, my dear. But, alas, you are tied down by the strings of this world.

In its true abode the soul enjoys at all times the bliss of union. Love transforms it from the material and physical attachments to the finer, spiritual regions, and the drop of the soul is merged in the ocean of the Lord. In such a state, a lover is not an ordinary person. He is the master of supernatural powers. Love, in reality, is such an alchemy that it turns even common persons into spiritual emperors.

Kabir Sahib says,

चलु रे बैकुंठ तुझहि ले तारउ ॥ हिचहि त प्रेम कै चाबुक मारउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडड़ी भगत कबीर, पृ० 329)

The lovers have such great power that they can even take a leap to the highest region by simply exerting their own internal force.
(Kabir)

The lover's attention is then constantly fixed in the Beloved, and his mind suffers a state of restlessness on separation.

The unique quality of love is this: If a seed of love is sown into its field, it is followed by pain, burning, separation. These are the crops that grow. The lover sometimes complains, O, why did I ever love? Sometimes he berates his eyes and reprimands them for ever having cast a glance on the Beloved, despite the fact that he had stealthily cast a glance at his Beloved. He will not speak about this subject to anyone, who is not able to understand the condition of his heart, for to talk of the pain of one's heart to a person, who has never felt such pain is to invite more pain. He, however, keeps the Beloved within his eyes, wherever his eyes go. He regards his Beloved as of more importance than even his own life. Amir Khusro says,

काफ़िरे—इश्कम मुसलमानी मरा दरकार नीस्त,
हर रगे—मन तार गश्ता हाजते—जुन्नार नीस्त।
आशिकां रा रोजे—महशर बा कियामत कार नीस्त,
कारे—आशिक जुज तमाशा—ए—जमाले—यार नीस्त।

-- अमीर ख़ुसरो

I have become an infidel on account of love. I do not need this superficial religion of mine. Every cell of my body has been filled with the rays of love. I do not need even the sacred thread.

We lovers have no anxiety regarding the dissolution of the world, because our aim is to continue to see the glory of our Beloved.

Tulsi Sahib says,

तुलसी ऐसी प्रीत कर, जैसे चन्द चकोर।
चोंच झुकी गरदन लगी, चितवत वाही ओर।।

-- संत बानी संग्रह भाग-1 (पृ० 211)

A lover, even when he is awake, is asleep to the world. Whether sleeping or in a state of wakefulness, his soul's attention is fixed on the Beloved, and that link never breaks. His love is like that of the moon-bird for the full moon. It continues to gaze at it as long as it shines. It will strain its neck backwards till it almost touches the ground, but will not change its position from the time the moon appears in the east till it sinks in the west.

The Intoxication of Love

In the religion of love-intoxicated, people there is neither day nor night. They are constantly engaged in the contemplation of the Beloved day and night, and they do what cannot possibly be done by people of the world or even by very intellectual and clever people. The nights of the world are their days. In other words, they are awake in remembrance of the Lord day and night. Even the force of calamities cannot remove their attention from their Beloved.

The heart and the mind of lovers are always drowned in the remembrance of the Beloved. They have no concern for their body, because they have lost themselves in the remembrance and contemplation of their Beloved. They have no rest or peace, unless their mind is fixed on their Beloved. Worldly troubles, poverty, pain, hunger or anxieties do not distract their attention.

Sheikh Sa'adi says,

न सन्न दर दिले—आशिक न आब दर गिरबाल ।

-- शेख सादी

There is no patience in the heart of a lover, which is like a sieve through which water of patience immediately passes.

गर जहां ज़ेरो—ज़बर गश्ता जि ऊ, आशिके ज़ेरो—ज़बर रा विह ख़बर ।

नाला कम कुन किह कसे वाकिफ़ नीस्त, राहे—उश्शक सहर रा विह ख़बर ।

Lovers are not affected by any calamities or unrest in this world, because they remain aloof from worldly distractions. They should keep silent, because nobody is able to understand the secret of such lovers. The lovers of God are not even aware how and when the sun rises.

A lover has become mad after his Beloved, and there is joy in that intoxication. He has broken the cup of his body and has no feeling about it. What effect can anybody's clever and intellectual talk have on him? He has passed beyond the gardens of intellect.

He is so intoxicated in love that the wine of ecstasy drips down his eyes at all times. Maulana Jaami says,

ई क़दर मस्तम किह अज़ चश्मम शराब आयद बरुं ।

-- मौलाना जामी

I am so intoxicated with the bliss of love that the wine of intoxication is overflowing from my eyes.

Shams-i-Tabriz has also described the state of intoxication of a lover of God in the following words:

सरबानां उश्तरां बीं सर बसर कत्तार मस्त,
मीर मस्त ओ ख्वाजा मस्त ओ सार मस्त अग्यार मस्त ।
आसमां ता चंद गर्दी गर्दिशे—उन्सुर बिबीं,
खाक् मस्त ओ आब मस्त ओ बाद मस्त ओ नार मस्त ।
हाले—सूरत ई चुनीं ओ हाले—मअनी खुद मपुरस,
नफ़स—अक्लो—रुह मस्त ओ दायमा असरार मस्त ।
बीखहाए—ई दरखतां मै निहानी मीखुरंद,
चंद रोज़े सब्र कुन ता खुद शवी बेदार मस्त ।
शम्स तब्रेजी दर आमद दर दिलम बज़्मे—निहाद,
अज़ शराबे—इश्के—हक्क बनिगर दरो—दीवार मस्त ।

— दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 54)

I see the caravan of camels as well as their drivers happy from head to foot in the intoxication of love. The rich are intoxicated, the priests are intoxicated, my friends are intoxicated, and even my enemies are intoxicated. I see them all in a state of unique bliss.

O heaven, how long will you continue moving! Look at the movement of the elements: Earth is intoxicated; water is intoxicated; wind is intoxicated; and even fire is intoxicated.

This is the state which I see outside. But please do not ask me about the state of my inner being. My senses, my intellect and even my soul are intoxicated, and they have achieved a permanent bliss of intoxication.

The roots of these tree-like bodies are drinking the secret wine of love. Have patience, because even you will one day wake up into this state of intoxication.

In my mind there is a festival of bliss. You should try to feel the effect of the wine of Divine Love, so that even the walls and the doors are all intoxicated.

When the wine of God's love is flowing in the mind of a lover; he sees that bliss everywhere. Shams-i-Tabriz has very forcefully pleaded for an increasing ecstasy of God's love in the following quote:

मस्ती ओ मस्त तर शौ हम जेर ओ हम ज़बर शौ,
बे ख़ेश ओ बे ख़बर शौ अज खुद ख़बर चिह आयद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 140)

If you are intoxicated, increase it and become senseless in it. Try to know yourself, and become wise in it. We cannot do anything without.

He further says,

गर खूए मा नदानी, रौ खूए बादा रा बीं, चूं खूए ख़ेश करदस्त,
ई बादा खूए मा रा ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 31)

O you men with superficial eyes! If you are not familiar with our nature, please go away! Try to understand the true nature of our intoxication. This Divine Ecstasy has now given me all its qualities.

हर किह बुवद सैदे-इश्क, कै बुवद ऊ सैदे-मर्ग,
चूं सिरपराश मह बुवद, कै रसदश ज़ख़े-तीर ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 158)

Even death cannot mar the happiness of those who have been pierced by the pangs of love, because contemplation on the face of the Beloved has become a shield for them. How can the arrows of this world pierce them?

The Emotions of a Lover

As soon as love is awakened, the lover is dyed in its hue. A lover always desires to continue to see his Beloved and listen to the Beloved's words most attentively. Every part of the lover's body, from head to foot, is attentively engaged in seeing the Beloved and in listening to the words of the Beloved.

A lover yearns to see the face of his Beloved, as one longs to see the moon, and is delighted by its beauty. There is always a strong desire in his mind to listen to the words of the Beloved, for to him they are full of nectar. He feels that if his arms cannot embrace his Beloved, they should be broken and if his eyes cannot enjoy the sweetness of the sight of the Beloved, they should become blind. He desires the Beloved to live in his eyes, so that he may not see anybody else, and the Beloved also may not see any other person. Kabir Sahib said that a lover conceals his Beloved in his eyes. He does not

see any other person, nor does he permit the Beloved to see anyone else. He says,

नैनो अंतर आव तू नैन झाँपि तोहि लेवै ।

ना मैं देखों ओर को, ना तोहि देखन देवै ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (पतिव्रता का अंग 4, पृ० 28)

O my Beloved! Come into my eyes. As soon as you come, I shall immediately close them so that I may not see any other person and that you also may not see anyone else.

In love, there is no other desire, just as nothing remains in a burning fire. The people of the world demand fulfilment of their desires from God. But a lover, in whom the fire of love has been kindled, demands only God from God. Guru Ram Das says,

बसुधा सपत दीप है सागर कढि कंचनु कढि धरीजै ।।

मेरे ठाकुर के जन इनहु न बाछहि हरि मागहि हरि रसु दीजै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कलिआन 4, पृ० 1323)

If the precious jewels and treasures of all the seven worlds and the seven oceans were taken and placed before a lover, and someone were to ask him whether he would prefer this wealth or the Beloved, the lover would not even consider the treasures. He asks from God for only the nectar of His Name.

Hafiz says,

गदाए-कूए-तू अज हश्त खुल्द मुस्तगनी अस्त,

असीरे-बंदे-तू अज हर दो आलम आज़ाद अस्त ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 55)

The beggars in the vicinity of the Beloved do not even have any desire for heaven, because the victims of love are actually free from both the worlds.

When a lover is fully absorbed in love for his Beloved, he does not give a thought to anything belonging to this world. A lover imbibes the beauty of the Beloved in his mind at all times, and tries to understand the greatness of the Beloved in his heart. He does not see anything else in the whole world.

How should one Love?

Love is the inherent quality of the soul. This cannot be described in any language. Even the Saints and other

wise men have to explain it by giving examples. Love is the sustainer of life, just as a lotus lives on water, its growth is in the water and it blossoms through the currents of water in it. Similarly, love is the life of the soul, and the existence of the soul is dependent on love of God. The soul becomes happy, when love takes hold of it. Guru Nanak says,

रे मन ऐसी हरि सिउ प्रीति करि जैसी जल कमलेहि ॥

लहरी नालि पछाड़ीऐ भी विगसै असनेहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 59)

God is the Elixir of our life and you should love Him. As your love for Him increases, your soul will blossom on the water of love like a lotus.

Water is the sustainer of the life of the fish, which feels happy and comfortable in streams of water. Without water, it feels so much pain that it cannot live. Just as the chatrak चातृक (rain-bird) is thirsty only for drops of rain and does not drink the waters of streams and tank; just as the dawn bird longs only for the sun and does not sleep the whole night, because she is always looking for the sun to rise, when her mate would come and meet her; or just as water has love for milk and if put on the fire will burn itself first (will evaporate) and will not allow the milk to be burnt, in the same manner, you should love your Lord.

रे मन ऐसी हरि सिउ प्रीति करि जैसी मछुली नीर ॥

जिउ अधिकउ तिउ सुखु घणो मनि तनि सांति सरीर ॥

बिनु जल घड़ी न जीवई प्रभु जाणै अभ पीर ॥

रे मन ऐसी हरि सिउ प्रीति करि जैसी चातृक मेह ॥

सर भरि थल हरीआवले इक बूंद न पवई केह ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 60)

O my mind! Give your love to the Lord just as fish loves the water. If the water is plentiful it is happy and its mind is at peace, but without water it cannot live for a single moment.

O my mind! Have love for the Lord as the rain bird has love for the drops or rain.

It will not drink even a drop from the tanks and streams filled with water before it.

रे मन ऐसी हरि सिउ प्रीति करि जैसी जल दुध होइ ॥
 आवटणु आपे खवै दुध कउ खपणि न देइ ॥
 आपे मेलि विछुनिआ सचि वडिआई देइ ॥
 रे मन ऐसी हरि सिउ प्रीति करि जैसी चकवी सूर ॥
 खिनु पलु नीद न सोवई जाणै दूरि हजूरि ॥
 मनमुखि सोझी ना पवै गुरमुखि सदा हजूरि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 60)

O my mind! Love your Lord as the water loves the milk.

It protects the milk when put on a fire and does not permit it to be burnt.

O my mind! Have love for the Lord like that of a dawn bird for the sun.

It does not sleep the whole night, because it longs for the sun to rise to enable it to meet its mate.

जिउ चातुक जल प्रेम पिआसा ॥ जिउ मीना जल माहि उलासा ॥

नानक हरि रसु पी तृपतासा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी म० 1, पृ० 226)

Just as a rain bird is thirsty only for the drops of rain, and a fish longs for water, O Nanak! My thirst will also be quenched by the Elixir of God's Name.

Guru Ram Das says,

प्रीतम प्रीति लगी प्रभ करी जिव सूरजु कमलु निहारे ॥

मेर सुमेर मोरु बहु नाचौ जब उनवै घन घनहारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गट 4, पृ० 983)

A lover is attached to the beloved just as much as the lotus is to the sun; just as much as a peacock loves the clouds; and whenever the clouds appear the peacock starts dancing in an ecstasy of happiness.

He further says,

जैसी गगनि फिरंती ऊडती कपरे बागे वाली ॥

ओह राखै चीतु पीछे बिचि बचरे नित हिरदै सारि समाली ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी बैरागनि म० 4, पृ० 168)

Just as the white flamingo keeps its mind always fixed on its little nestlings, even during its distant flights above the earth, similarly you should keep your mind always in the remembrance of God.

Guru Arjan Dev has also given similar examples and has strongly advocated love for the Lord in the following words:

नाद कुरंकहि बेधिआ सनमुख उटि धावै॥
 भवरु लोभी कुसम बासु का मिलि आपु बंधावै॥
 तिउ संत जना हरि प्रीति है देखि दरसु अघावै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जैतसरी म० 5, पृ० 708)

Just as a deer places its head on a musical instrument or just as a bumblebee is intoxicated with the fragrance of the flower, so much so that it confines itself within its petals and dies rather than come out to save itself; similarly a lover should have an equally great love for the Lord and should attain eternal life by meeting Him.

जिउ मिलि बछरे गऊ प्रीति लगावै॥ कामनि प्रीति जा पिरु घरि आवै॥
 हरि जन प्रीति जा हरि जसु गावै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी गुआरेरी म० 4, पृ० 164)

As the cow shows her love to her strayed calf when she finds it, and as the bride shows her love for her husband when he returns home, so does the Lord's humble servant love to sing the Praises of the Lord.

भीखक प्रीति भीख प्रभ पाइ॥ भूखे प्रीति होवै अंनु खाइ॥
 गुरसिख प्रीति गुर मिलि आघाइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी गुआरेरी म० 4, पृ० 164)

The beggar loves to receive charity from the wealthy landlord. The hungry person loves to eat food. The GurSikh (True disciple) loves to find satisfaction by meeting the Guru.

Saints are surging oceans of God's love, and they act as lighthouses in our life's journey in this world. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Kabir Sahib, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Rama Krishna Param Hans, Shams-i-Tabriz, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz and many other Saints have left their footprints on the sands of time for our guidance. Their lives were oceans of love. By studying their writings, love for spirituality will be awakened in our minds. But above all, we should meet a Master who is the manifestation of God, so that we may receive guidance and be able to obtain within, the nectar of love.

The Location of Love

Love is above the three gunas (attributes). Our body, our life and our mind are connected with the three attributes of Nature, but love is very much above them and is a part of the soul.

Therefore, it is free from the taint of Tamas, Rajas and Sattvic desires. That is, it does not wish to remain, to receive, or to be anything. Divine Love is free from the mixture of illusions and is always pure in the regions above; but in the regions below, it is mixed with physical matter and the low desires of animalism.

Where can we obtain love? It is within us, but everybody cannot get it. We may feel it, but we cannot grasp it. The whole world is busy searching for it. We can experience it only within ourselves. Maghrabi Sahib says,

आं किह् उम्रे दर पए ऊ मी दवीदम सू-बसू
नागहानश याप्तम बा दिल निशस्ता रू बरू।
आखिर-उल-अमरश बदीदम मोअतकिफ़ दर कूए-दिल,
गरचिह् बिस्तार दवीदम दर पए ऊ कू बकू।

-- मग़रबी

When I looked in, I found within me that which has been sought for ages by all mankind, from one corner of the world to the other. We have been searching for it for many ages here and there, but we have found it only in our heart. Therefore, you should not search for your lost Beloved outside. You will find Him only in the recess of your heart.

The place of love is in the soul, which is a particle of God, who is love. It is therefore inherent in the soul.

Love is manifested in various ways, that is, for children, wife, family and other relatives, etc. When we look at a thing with the eyes of love, it becomes beautiful. When love kindles, it beautifies everything. Actually, love is a feeling of beauty – sometimes it is concealed, and sometimes it is revealed. When feelings of hatred are manifested, love is concealed. When feelings of attraction appear, then love also appears. But it is within us at all times. Our very life is love. We have come from love and we live in love. We

have to merge in love, as it is the protective cover of our body.

Truth is love, and it resides in our heart. Love is Naam. It is deeply engraved in our mind and in our body. Whoever tries to search for it, gets it. Love for the Lord is awakened in the disciples of a Master. Thus, all their desires are satisfied and they worship only the Lord. They tread the path of love and are fully engrossed in its bliss. The love of a Gurumukh is true love. By means of such a love, he meets his Beloved and is happy in the enjoyment of love's bliss day and night; and he achieves the state of Sahaj सहज. [Sahaj means easy, natural, real. Esoterically, it means the transition from the state of becoming into that of being one with the Supreme Lord; hence a state of supreme bliss].

This kind of love is awakened in Gurumukhs by the Beloved (Master) Himself, and they are absorbed in it day and night.

जिना गुरमुखि अंदरि नेहु तै प्रीतम सचौ लाइआ ॥

राती अतै डेहु नानक प्रेमि समाइआ ॥

गुरमुखि सचौ आसकी जितु प्रीतमु सचा पाईऐ ॥

अनदिनु रहहि अनंदि नानक सहजि समाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वहीक म० 4, पृ० 1422)

Gurumukhs have love in their hearts. That is the true love by means of which they have communion with the Lord. Day and night they are happy in their love. This love is awakened in the hearts of Gurumukhs by God Himself and, O Nanak, they remain happy in that bliss and ultimately merge into the eternal state of Sahaj.

Teachings of Love in the Old Scriptures

We can find teachings concerning love in the scriptures of all the religions, according to the customs and circumstances prevailing at that time. Muslim Saints have mentioned love profusely in their books. In the sayings of Christ, there is also particular emphasis on love. In the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Shastras we also find teachings about the path of devotion. The path of love or devo-

tion is, however, achieved only through the Grace of the Lord.

The Upanishads lay great stress on self-surrender to the Will of the Lord. Teachings concerning the path of love have also been described in the Adi Granth and by many Saints, such as Tulsi Sahib, Swami Ji, Dadu Sahib, Paltu Sahib and others, in a unique manner. It teaches the doctrine of oneness while leading a life of love as a householder in this world.

Love is our Birthright

God is the ocean of love, and the soul is in essence a drop of the same ocean. Love is inherent in our system. Love is the Emperor, and we are His children. We must take good care of the kingdom of our love. How long can we remain confined within the limits of our body? It is shameful for us to remain entangled in the worldly attachments of wealth, etc. We should not desire anything except love.

Love is only available through a Perfect Master

This tree of love is concealed from the eyes of the ordinary worldly people, and it can be seen only by the rare few children of the Lord, even though it is indescribable. To understand the mysteries of love, is not the privilege of everybody. You should therefore keep the company of a person who has eyes that can see the greatness of love, who sings songs of love like a nightingale, and who is always happy with the flowers of love. Such a one is not subject to any law, because this treasure is bestowed only through the special Grace and Mercy of God Himself. Love is another name for losing one's heart to another. How it is lost can be answered only by those people, who have experienced it.

इश्क क्या शै है किसी कामिल से पूछा चाहिए।

किस तरह जाता है दिल बेदिल से पूछा चाहिए।

What is Love? You should ask a Master. How is the heart given away? You should ask one who has lost his heart.

Love not reduced to Speech or Print

The story of love cannot be reduced to cold print, just as it is impossible to limit an ocean to its waves. A pen is powerless to describe love's mysteries fully and clearly. It is also beyond the power of the human tongue to describe love. The description of love cannot be expressed in writing or in speech, so one cannot get it from the pages of books.

Whatever people may say about it, their words are not the path of love. The roots of love are in the Infinite, and its green leaves are spreading beyond limits. The tree of love is not supported either by the earth or the sky. It is described to a certain extent in the scriptures. The people of learning are unable to give a faithful description of it because it is indescribable. Only a rare person (a true Master) can impart the knowledge of love correctly to a true and real seeker. The worldly people are all ignorant of it. Hafiz says,

बिश्नूँ औराक़ बगर हमदर्से—माई, किह् इल्मे—इश्क़ दर दफ़तर न बाशद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 142)

If you wish to join my class, throw away all of your books. The knowledge of love is not found in them.

The Form of Love

There is no difference between love and God. God is love, and love is God; both are beyond thought and description. The Elixir of Love can be tasted only by inner experience. All descriptions of love are far from the love itself.

A lover is actually like a doll made of salt. When plunged into the sea in order to find its depth, the doll dissolves in the water and no trace of it can be found. Or a lover is like a moth that goes near a light, but does not return. Just as a dumb person feels happy by eating something sweet, but is unable to describe its sweetness in words, similarly the taste of love, even when it is experienced, is indescribable.

मिलि सखीआ पुछहि कहु कंत नीसाणी ।।
रसि प्रेम भरी कछु बोलि न जाणी ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 459)

I met my friend and asked her the signs of her Lord. But she does not know how to speak, because she is filled with the intoxication of the bliss of love.

Love cannot be described in any language. But if and when a rare individual experiences true love, it is manifested in every cell of his body. In other words, it is like seeing the very Lord Himself in that manifestation. Love has a definite existence, which can only be experienced and cannot be described by superficial examples. As and when it is experienced, no other proof is necessary.

आप्तताब आमद दलीले—आप्तताब ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रुम (दफ्तर 1, पृ० 43)

The very appearance of the sun is the proof of its existence.

This Elixir can only be tasted by actual experience. It cannot be conceived of by thinking, reasoning or by arguments. Mind and intellect are only confusing.

Love can be Seen in a Lover

If you wish to see love, you should meet a lover. Then you will discover its unique currents. A lover is like a cup, which is overflowing with the Elixir of Love, and by looking at him a desire to follow him is awakened. Maulana Rumi says,

गर इश्क रा न बीनी दर आशिकां निगर,
हल्लाज वार खुश खुश बरदार बर आमद ।

-- मौलाना रुमी

If you are unable to detect love, you should at least see the spark of love in a lover. A tiny spark of that special current enabled Mansur to ascend the scaffold with a smile and sacrifice his life.

Love in the Beloved

The existence of love is caused by the beauty of the Beloved. Love is first awakened in the Beloved. Unless there is an attraction from the latter, any action by the lover will be

of no avail. If there is need for medicine, then it is necessary to have pain, because if one is not ailing he needs no medicine. The Beloved always keeps an eye on the condition of His lover and imparts all the love that He can attract.

We have no pain (of love) within us, otherwise the physician is always there. The physician of love has the power even to give life to the dead and is a fountain of mercy, but if we have no desire or no pangs, on whom shall He bestow His mercy? You should therefore stop running after the world, but have a longing to go in the direction of love, because this alone will free you from the demon of death. You should hunt for the Truth and not care for other games, because this hunting will even scare the Angel of Death. All the thoughts in one's mind – even if they are as beautiful as flowers – are thorns if they are not directed towards the Beloved. The wealth of the spark of love can be seen only in lovers. If you turn away from such lovers, you will be sorry in the end.

Means of Developing Love

Masters have described the methods by which love can be awakened. These methods are known to them by their own inner experience, and to follow their instructions is known as spiritual practice. The method of the Masters is the concentrated essence of the various moral and religious practices that are prevalent in the world – such as going to temples and mosques or other religious places, reading of scriptures, prayers, worship, charity, pilgrimages, and so forth. These are all outward observances. Austerity, contemplation, and other practices are good for cleansing the mind and senses. They are all included in religious ceremonies and act as an incentive to the soul, because out of their sincere practice love for the Lord can be awakened.

Just as a nurse feeds a child on milk and is responsible for his growth and well-being, similarly these observances are helpful to seekers in their progress towards a spiritual

life. The real spiritual practice works as a mother to the soul. It must be remembered that it is only a mother who gives birth to the child, and the milk is produced in her breasts. A nurse is helpful only in external care. To give birth to a child is the function of a mother.

Similarly, of themselves, ritual, ceremonies, religions, Scriptures, etc., cannot create true love. All these austerities and prayers can be given up where there is love. In spirituality, it is only the Saints or the Masters, who are the bestowers of spiritual birth to a person.

A Master makes the devotee follow methods which He Himself has experienced within. He guides the seeker in this internal practice and, like a mother, helps in the spiritual growth of the child of love by making him drink the Divine Elixir. Then the devotee realizes the Truth.

All rituals and ceremonies, by which the fire of love can be kindled, are good, because in that fire all desires and temptations are burned. Guru Ram Das says,

सो जपु सो तपु सा ब्रत पूजा जितु हरि सिउ प्रीति लगाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बराड़ी 4, पृ० 720)

Actions such as austerities, fasting and worship are good only if they aid in awakening one's love for God.

Bulleh Shah expresses the same thought in the following beautiful words:

शरीअत साडी दाई ए। तरीक़त साडी माई ए।

अगों हक्क हकीक़त आई ए। अते मारफ़तो कुझ पाया ए।

टुक बूझ कौन छुप आयाए ॥

-- कुल्लियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 89)

Religious customs are our nurse; rituals and ceremonies are our mother; but if we wish to achieve something really worthwhile, that can be done only by spiritual practice (inner method). Then alone do we realize the real Truth.

The aim of all rituals was the same in the beginning, but with the laps of time and by not following them sincerely, they have all become superficial and nominal observance. Thus, the very rituals, which were intended to bring us salvation, have become our bonds.

Love is to be found in its original form in every human being. God is love and the soul is a part of Him; therefore, the soul is also love. But because the soul is concealed under the coverings of the mind, love is also concealed along with it. It is necessary that we remove the covering. This can be explained by an example:

Electricity is present in everything, but it is in a latent form. When we produce it by means of a battery, its currents can be radiated for thousands of miles. Similarly, Divine Love is a big electric current. We can call it human electricity, but this electricity is a thousand times more powerful and bright. When it is produced, it destroys all dirt and unclean ideas rising in one's mind. Then the soul shines forth in its inherent brightness. In other words, the path, which may have taken hundreds of years to attain by other methods, is covered in the twinkling of an eye by means of love.

Love is inherent in every person and it may be kindled in two ways. One is by the Grace of the Lord or that of His manifestation in this world, namely a Master. The other method is by means of spiritual practice.

Just as electricity exists in every particle, in a latent state, but it is produced with the help of a battery and brightens a large area, similarly, the spark of love is produced in the heart of a seeker by the Grace of God or a Master and this force then becomes apparent.

The second method – that of spiritual discipline, such as repetition (Simran सिमरन), contemplation and listening to the Sound Current, also produces this powerful electric current of love in human beings.

In actual practice, the first essential is to awaken love for God by means of repetition and then by contemplation. As we repeat the Five Holy Names with the tongue of thought, our attraction and love for Him increase within ourselves. When a lover remembers Him and becomes fully absorbed in His remembrance, then God turns the lover's attention towards devotion by His Divine Grace.

Simran (Repetition) done with faith, produces a unique feeling in the heart. By doing Simran, a feeling of bliss and divine influence fills the heart. This state is produced sooner or later, according to the individual devotee's sanskaras संस्कार (predominating nature, the results of past karmic impressions). Dhyān ध्यान is the second spiritual practice. At its beginning, with the help of repetition of Charged Names, the sensory currents withdraw from the body below to the eye-focus; that leads to the perception of the Inner Light. Then starts the second phase of Dhyān – Contemplation. It can be attained by absorbing ones attention into the Inner Divine Light, so much so, that one forget oneself completely. Dhyān leads to Bhajan.

The third part of the spiritual practice is Bhajan भजन, listening to the Shabd, Naam or Sound Current. God is Shabd, and God is also love. Therefore, Naam or Shabd is love. As the soul contacts Shabd, love flows out from within. Guru Nanak says,

बिनु नाम प्रीति पिआरु नाही वसहि साचि सुहेलीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पुरबी म० 1, पृ० 242)

The love and attachment by which one merges into the Truth is not possible without Naam.

Guru Arjan says,

प्रेम पदारथु नामु है भाई माइआ मोह बिनासु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 640)

Love is Naam, with which the attachment to physical attractions is destroyed.

Guru Amar Das says,

भगत सचै दरि सोहदे सचै सबदि रहाए ॥

हरि की प्रीति तिन ऊपजी हरि प्रेम कसाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बूजरी की वार म० 3, पृ० 513)

Devotees of the Shabd Practice receive honour in the Court of the Lord. The Lord's Love wells up in them; they are attracted by the Lord's Love.

प्रेम पदारथु पाईऐ गुरुमुखि ततु वीचारु ॥

सा धन आपु गवाइआ गुर कै सबदि सीगारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग की वार म० 1, पृ० 61)

*A Gurumukh achieves love by means of contemplation on God.
By the adornment of Shabd his ego is destroyed.*

The principal way towards the achievement of love is the Satsang and company of a Perfect Master, and through His Grace. Guru Arjan says,

जा कउ भए क्रिपाल प्रभ हरि हरि सेई जपात ॥
नानक प्रीति लगी तिन्ह राम सिउ भेटत साध संगत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 454)

Only those who have the Grace of the Lord on them, are attracted to spiritual practice. O Nanak, meeting the Saadh Sangat, the company of the Holy, they embrace love for the Lord.

It is only by the teachings of Saints, that love for a perfect Master is produced in us and our love is fixed at His Lotus Feet.

बिनु गुर प्रीति न ऊपजै भाई मनमुखि दूजै भाइ ॥
तुह कुटहि मनमुख करम करहि भाई पलै किछू न पाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 3, पृ० 603)

Without the Guru, love for the Lord does not well up, O Siblings of Destiny; the self-willed manmukhs are engrossed in the love of duality. Actions performed by the manmukhs are like the threshing of the chaff – they obtain nothing for their efforts.

चरन कमल सिउ लागी प्रीति ॥ गुर पूरे की निरमल रीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 893)

It was through the pure Grace of the Perfect Master that my love was fixed at His Lotus Feet.

Guru Ramdas says,

बिनु गुर प्रेमु न लभई जन वेखहु मनि निरजासि ॥
हरि गुर विचि आपु रखिआ हरि मेले गुर साबासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 4, पृ० 996)

One cannot achieve love without a Master. You should bear it in mind that God is love, and He is manifested in the Master, and it is the Master who enables one to meet the Lord.

One cannot be truly devoted without a Master, nor can one attach oneself to Shabd. We can practice Naam through intense love for our Master. And true love, which never perishes, can be achieved only through a Perfect Master.

बिनु सतिगुर भगति न होवई नामि न लगै पिआरु ॥

जन नानक नामु अराधिआ गुर कै हेत पिआरि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 3, पृ० 1417)

Devotion is not possible without a Master. Love for Naam is also not possible. O Nanak! I can practice Naam only by the Grace of my Master's love.

सचा प्रेम पिआरु गुर पूरे ते पाईऐ ॥

कबहू न होवै भंगु नानक हरि गुण गाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 3, पृ० 1422)

True love can be produced by loving a perfect Master, because, O Nanak! this never perishes, and we sing of the glory of the Lord.

Maulana Rumi says,

पीर चूं नब्ज-मन सोख्ता रा तजरिबा करद,

गुप्त हैहात किह आं जुहद हमा सौदा बूद ।

मतलबो-मक्सदे-उश्शाक़ दरिं दश्ते-फ़ना,

न उलूम ओ न उकूल ओ न ज़ियानस्त ओ न सूद ।

ई बगुप्त ओ नफ़सी ज़रफ़ बमन दर निगरीस्त,

नज़रे-ऊ हमा हस्ती जि दिले-मन ब-रबूद ।

गुफ़त अकनूं बिरो-बादा खुर ओ शाद बज़ी,

दूर बाश अज़ रहे-सालूसी ओ अज़ दल्के-कबूद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 105)

The Master felt my pulse when I was already exhausted through religious practices. He said, 'Alas! Whatever austerities and worship you have done are all useless.

The aim of the lovers of God is neither to gain learning nor to gather treasures of the intellect, nor to have any connection with gains and losses of the world.'

After saying this, He gazed into my eyes, and the gaze of my Master effaced my very being.

Then He said, 'Go and drink that wine which is full of the intoxication of bliss and spend the remaining years of your life in that happiness. You should now leave all outward rituals and entanglements.'

Just as God has already put electricity in the clouds and other things, in a latent form, but various actions are needed to produce it in its dynamic form, similarly love is in

every soul in a latent form, because God is love and we are a particle of Him.

One way by which love is created is that the Master or God Himself awakens love in a soul and intoxicates the soul with the ecstasy of love. Secondly, by following spiritual practices, the hue of love imparts its colour to a lover. But both of these ways are possible only through the abundant Grace of the Master, by which alone all obstacles are removed and a desire is produced in the heart of the seeker to go from one spiritual region to the next. Guru Arjan says,

पंथा प्रेम न जाणई भूली फिरै गवारि ॥

नानक हरि बिसराइ कै पउदे नरकि अंध्यार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वहीक म० 5, पृ० 1426)

Those who do not know the way of love are foolish; they wander, lost and confused. O Nanak, forgetting the Lord, they fall into the deep pit of hell.

Shams-i-Tabrez says,

किह् दर्श रह हमगां अज दिले-खुद बेखबरंद,

मोमिनो-मुशरिको-तरसा-ओ-महबूसी-ओ-यहूद ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 105)

Atheists and all religious preachers, religions and the followers of the world's many faiths are bereft of this treasure in their heart.

How Love is Produced

Love is produced or awakened in the heart in various ways. The first method is Darshan (to behold the Beloved). The second is to talk to the Beloved personally; and the third is Dhyān (contemplation of the Beloved).

We see someone and create a mental picture in our mind of his sweet manner of talking and his attractive face, and feel happy in that thought night and day. This is the first stage.

Sometimes we listen to the description of someone's beauty and forget ourselves in thinking of that individual. This is the second stage.

When we fill our heart with the purity and noble qualities of someone and think about him day and night. This is the third stage.

But when we are attracted by His handsome form and behold His beauty, and have been pierced by the sharp arrows of love, then that attractive face keeps shining before our mind's eye at all times.

Essentials for Stable and Permanent Love

Six principles are essential in the Path of Love:

1. There should be no selfish motive in our dealings with the Beloved. Do not ask from Him anything, except devotion to Him. Love should be selfless. To desire or to ask for comforts, wealth, children, etc., is selfish love.

2. Love should be reserved only for the Lord or for the Master. If you are attached to others, your love is naturally scattered and its intensity is decreased. When our love is thus scattered, we cannot meet God nor can love remain alive. You should live in this world without becoming entangled in it. Naamdev was once asked:

When does your Lord show His face to you?

He replied:

When I am able to detach myself from all relations and friends. He comes only then.

3. Love should be constant. It must be constantly centred on the Lotus Feet of the Beloved. A lover's mind, intellect and soul should all be dedicated to the Beloved. The mind should think of the Beloved, and He should always be in the lover's thoughts. By means of the intellect, one should think about Him, and a longing for His Darshan should constantly rankle within the soul. One should not become engrossed in worldly activities, which dissipate the attention fixed in the Lord.

4. Love for the Lord should neither decrease nor break in its continuity. One should keep oneself engaged in observances and should have associates, through whom he will continue at all times to get food for love. The knocks of love should be constantly received, so that the longing for God and the attraction for Him may be always on the increase.

5. A lover should observe the practice of good conduct. Just as medicine is a remedy for an ailment, but along with it abstinence from undesirable food is also essential, similarly, the remedy for ailments of the soul is love, and good conduct in life is comparable to abstinence from intake of undesirable food.

6. What is good conduct? First, one should always speak the truth and should avoid telling lies. To describe anything correctly is to speak the truth. Whatever one has in his mind and whatever one feels should be spoken out. In other words, the heart, the brain and the tongue should all combine into one truth.

What is the Basis of all Evils?

- Action, which is done underhandedly.
- Action, which compels the door to tell lies in defence.
- To think evil of others.

If we feel that by doing something evil nobody will find out, and the consequences would be most unpleasant if someone did find out, that is the first root of evil. Actions performed with this mental background are conducive to disbelief in the omnipresence of God. Such a mental state also destroys one's own spirit of right-thinking and creates fear of the world. By such actions, concentration of the mind is lost and restlessness is created.

When a particular action is committed and substantiated with lies, the mental state described above continues. A liar, to substantiate his lie before others always goes on thinking of arguments to support it and spends a lot of time in anxiety to propagate it. To tell a lie, requires a very good memory; otherwise it is disclosed from one's own words (by contradicting the previous statement).

If we think ill of somebody, we forget the connection of our soul with others. If we realize that God above knows all about our actions and is omnipresent, then all secret evil actions will automatically be avoided and we shall tell no lies, and the qualities of the soul will manifest profusely.

Kabir says,

साच बराबर तप नहीं, झूठ बराबर पाप ।

जा के हिरदे साच है, ता हिरदे आप ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साच का अंग 1, पृ० 150)

There is no austerity like truth and no sin like falsehood. Those in whose hearts truth prevails, also have God residing in their hearts.

To think evil of others is to cut one's connection with his own soul with a sharp axe. Not to think evil of others, is to create bonds of friendship with the soul. In this manner our love will be universal and will not antagonize anybody. The temple of our heart will be clean and a worthy seat for the Lord. A Muslim Saint says,

ख़ाना ख़ाली कुन दिला ता मज़िले-जानां शवी ।

Cleanse the temple of your heart of all rubbish so that it may be a fit abode for your Beloved.

One with a pure heart, is constantly happy. Do not hurt anybody's heart. The human heart is far better than thousands of places of worship. A man-made temple may be a place to worship a deity, but the heart is the place of pilgrimage that leads to God.

If you hurt anybody's heart, then your worship, your fasting, reading of holy scriptures or performance of daily duties are of no value before God. Practice non-violence. Do not think ill of others, nor cause pain by your anger, back-biting, etc. To see God in everything – whether man or beast – and not to injure anyone, constitutes good conduct. By trespassing the principle of good conduct, we cannot love God, nor can we have His Darshan (nor can we behold Him).

Our love for the Beloved, that is, the Master or God, should be reverential and full of humility. In love, we forget ourselves. A father loves his child, and if the child pulls the father's beard, he does not punish the child, but livingly and quietly removes the child's hands from the beard. A lover also realizes that a servant is a servant, a Master is a Master, a child is a child, and a father is a father.

A servant will be a servant, despite the fact that he may become very dear to his master. We must remember that a devotee is a devotee, and that the object of his devotion is the Lord. A lover's love for the Beloved is good only if he does not disregard the Beloved's instructions. He should not argue, but should constantly keep his head bowed in the observance of His commandments. He should be respectful at all times. In other words, he should not transgress the limits of respect.

The maker of a lover is the Beloved, and it is the internal attraction of the Beloved that creates love. It is through His Grace, that the love remains alive. Otherwise, it is entirely useless. A lover should always consider his Beloved to be the Emperor of Emperors. If the Beloved yields to the obstinacy of the lover, it is His Grace. The greatness of the Beloved does not suffer thereby. His commands are the orders of an Emperor and the commands of God. You should constantly obey Him. Never utter words of disrespect under the influence of arrogance or the pride of your intellect or strength. Never should an idea of equality or disrespect enter your mind.

6. If, on the path of spirituality, a seeker transgresses the limits of reverence or respect, he falls in the eyes of the Beloved and will ultimately be degraded into misery and hatred. Everybody loves humility and proper respect; therefore the Beloved of your heart should receive much more of this love and respect. God is in the hands of His devotees. This is the magnanimity of the Oneness of His love. The Beloved bestows on the lover, the key of all His powers, which can even be exercised by the lover, but the lover always remains within the bounds of his Beloved's Will, except that in rare moments of forgetfulness, he may transgress the limits. He always keeps before him the wishes and the commands of his Beloved (the Master). He has no personal desires. A lover remains happy in the Will of his Beloved. It is for this reason that he is dear to the Master.

We should always ask from the Lord and from our Master, with great humility, for the gift of love. Disrespectful people remain devoid of the Grace and Mercy of God.

How can Love be Maintained?

If you wish to make friends with somebody, you first create a longing for him in your mind. If you wish to love God, you should cultivate a longing for God. Love cannot remain alive, without continuous cultivation. We can maintain love by love.

If we wish to be happy in some work, the happiness can be achieved only by doing that work regularly and continuously. Similarly, in order to become a lover we have to persist in our love. In order to get love, we have to do something, and if we wish to keep our love for someone alive, we have to follow certain principles. And for this it is necessary to sacrifice time and possession. Love can be maintained by exerting the same amount of effort that we spent in winning it.

Where is Love first Produced?

Love is first produced in the heart of the Beloved. If there is no light, the moth will never burn itself. Love is born in a man through good fortune by the Grace of God, and then only is one able to go into the company of Saints. Guru Ram Das says,

संत जना सिउ प्रीति बनि आई ॥ जिन कउ लिखतु लिखिआ धुरि पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी गुआरेरी म० 4, पृ० 164)

Those who are blessed with such pre-ordained destiny are in love with the Saints.

Regarding those who possess the wealth of love, you should understand that He Himself has granted this favour to them out of His Grace. This treasure can be obtained only through a Master.

Guru Arjan says,

साधसंगति सिउ प्रीति बणि आई ॥ पूरब करमि लिखत धुरि पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 743)

I have fallen in love with the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, by the karma of my past actions and my pre-ordained destiny.

It is exceedingly difficult to serve Him, but that is also the means of achieving all joy. This love is bestowed only

on such persons, on whom God Himself bestows it with His Grace. The company of Saints is also achieved by previous karmas and good fortune.

Love by a 'Gurumukh' and a 'Manmukh'

To love God is the rare fortune of a Gurumukh. To him the meeting with the Beloved is like the wearing of a garland of all good qualities around his neck. To awaken love within, to have the Darshan of the Lord, to love Scriptures, to produce a pure Light within – all these are the privileges of a Gurumukh. This state cannot be achieved by a Manmukh.

मिलि प्रीतम सुखु पाइआ सगल गुणा गलि हारु ॥

नानक गुरुमुखि पाईऐ हरि सिउ प्रीति पिआरु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० १, पृ० ९३७)

We meet our Beloved and we have achieved happiness. We have also worn around our neck the garland of all good qualities. O Nanak, it is only a Gurumukh who can achieve this love for God.

अंतरि प्रेमु परापति दरसनु ॥ गुरुबाणी सिउ प्रीति सु परसनु ॥

अहिनिसि निरमल जोति सबई घटि दीपकु गुरुमुखि जाता हे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० १, पृ० १०३२)

One who has love within, obtains the Beloved Vision of His Darshan. One who enshrines love for the Guru's Bani, meets Him. Day and night, the Gurumukh sees the immaculate Divine Light everywhere; this lamp illuminates his heart.

साकत प्रेमु न पाईऐ हरि पाईऐ सतिगुर भाइ ॥

सुख दुख दाता गुरु मिलै कहु नानक सिफति समाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० १, पृ० ५९७)

A Manmukh is one who follows the dictates of his mind. He cannot have love for God nor for a Master because, O Nanak, only with the Grace of a Guru, who is the bestower of pain and pleasure, can one merge into the Lord.

Qualities Awakened Through Love

- Destruction of the ego

Another name for love is continuous remembrance. By remembering the Beloved continuously, attachment and

love for Him are awakened within and the ego or self is destroyed. The lover then begins to merge into the Beloved, to the extent that he becomes His very form. Bulleh Shah says,

रांझा रांझा करदी नी मैं आपे रांझा होई ।

-- कुलियाते-बुल्लेशाह (पृ० 123)

I have been crying 'Ranjha, Ranjha, my beloved' so much that I myself have become Ranjha.

To forget one's self, is the fundamental principle of love. All the desires of a lover narrow down to the Will of the Beloved. His whole self is dissolved into the Beloved. When there is no self, then where are the desires? Even God is in search of such true lovers. Our ego is an obstacle between us and God. Bu-Ali Qalandar says,

ता तुई कै यार गरदद यारे-तू, चूं न बाशी यार बाशद यारे-तू ।

-- मसनवी बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (पृ० 32)

So long as thou art, how can thy Beloved be thine?

He further states:

चूं शवी फ़ानी तू अज ज़िक्रे-खुदा, राह याबी दर हरीमे-क्रिबिया ।

चूं बमानी बाखुदा याबी विसाल, ख्वेश रा गुमसाज ऐ साहिब कमाल ।

-- मसनवी बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (पृ० 21)

When you have emptied yourself by constant remembrance, you will find the path which leads to the Presence of the Lord.

When there is no I in you, then your God will have communion with you. Therefore, you should try to forget yourself.

A lover destroys his ego and thus loosens the ties of worldly attachment. Then the love which is between the lover and the Lord is born and he meets the Lord. Such love destroys all our selfish desires and makes the soul worthy of flying to the spiritual regions above. It is true that a person who has his body and his bodily energies under control also has control over higher regions.

Love is a certain remedy for all our ailments. That person is really fortunate who, by sacrificing himself, effaces his ego and thus is in intimate communion with God. Without destruction of one's ego, it is not possible to have the Darshan of the Lord. If you wish to purchase Him, sell yourself.

- Love only gives, and takes nothing

Love is such a unique quality that whosoever gets it, has no other desire left in him. Love makes man selfless and free from all care. In love, there is never any question of taking, because it knows only how to give. We love children and continue giving them things. We never desire anything from them, and they are a source of happiness to us.

The foundation of love is to give. Wherever there is love, there will be only the feeling to give, and the desire to receive anything will never be formed. Love is selfless. It is not selfish. Even in the love of God, the feeling of giving or surrendering ourselves to Him is the first step. In the beginning we may pray to God for the necessities of life, but this state is prior to the development of love for God.

Generally, people worship God with some ulterior motive, and they ask for worldly blessings. They pray that their children may be healthy, and they ask for the joys of heaven. Such people are either lovers of the world or the comforts of heaven. Only a rare few worship God for the sake of God alone. Our aim should be to remember God only out of love for Him. We should not blacken our heart by worldly desires, and should ask from Him nothing but love for Him.

विष्णु तुष्टु होरु जि मंगणा सिरि दुखा कै दुख ॥

देहि नामु संतोखीआ उतरै मन की भुख ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 5, पृ० 958)

To ask for any other than You, O Lord, is the most acute of miseries. Please bless me with Your Name, and make me content; may the hunger of my mind be satisfied.

With the appearance of love, our ego is consumed in the Will of God. Demands automatically cease and we are happy only in accepting the Will of the Beloved. A devotee considers it a sin to demand anything from God.

कुफ़ बाशद नज़्देशान करदन दुआ, क-ऐ अला अज़ मा बिगर्दा ई कज़ा ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 3, पृ० 188)

When we love somebody, what do we do? We sacrifice everything – our heart, our life, our body, etc. Whatever pleases the one whom we love also pleases us. Have we fallen so low that while trying to love Him we should also demand from Him the fulfilment of our desires? When we do this, have we any right to call ourselves lovers of God? We are not His lovers, but the lovers of His gifts. (Maulana Rumi)

Then, how can one meet God? Only he will meet Him who has sacrificed himself for Him, who is constantly and selflessly engaged in Naam – whether sitting, sleeping, awake, walking, etc. Such a man is of God, and God is his.

Those who demand things of the world from Him, will get their worldly desires fulfilled, but they will not meet God. He knows all our thoughts, so how can we deceive Him? He knows even the latent desires in our mind, and whatever we ask God for, He gives. The fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev says,

पिता कृपालि आगिआ इह दीनी बारिकु मुखि मांगै सो देना ॥

नानक बारिकु दरसु प्रभ चाहै मोहि ह्रिदै बसहि नित चरना ॥

— आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 5, पृ० 1266)

The Merciful Father has issued this Command: whatever the child disciple asks for with his mouth, is provided to him. The child, Nanak, longs for the Blessed Vision of God's Darshan. May His Feet always dwell within his heart.

A Master is the manifestation of God. A lover of a Master does not even demand salvation or Sat Naam. His love is for the sake of love and he gets everything without asking for it.

A wife loves her husband and because of that love he tries to satisfy her needs without her having to ask him. Similarly, a Master, who is the manifestation of God Himself, gives everything to us. He gives us whatever we need, without our asking. Above all, He bestows the highest treasure of love through which peace, concentration, a blissful life and inner awakening are produced. The lover's devotion is for Him alone, and in the eyes of a true devotee both the worlds appear to be nothing.

- Love is selfless

True love is free from all desires. Selfishness and love cannot meet. Love decreases in proportion to the degree of increase of selfishness; and love increases as selfishness decreases.

Leaving aside spirituality, it is not good to have a feeling of selfishness even in the ordinary day-to-day life. If we love someone with any selfish aim, then it is not love; rather, we love our own selfish ends. Similarly, those who worship with a desire for wealth, offspring, fame or heaven are not real devotees. That kind of love is more like a trade or a business. True love is only for the love of the Beloved. Sheikh Farid says,

फरीदा जा लबु ता नेहु किआ लबु त कूड़ा नेहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1378)

Where there is greed, there is no love; and if greed is there, that love is false.

Every soul is love in its very essence, but if this love is confined to a certain state and is directed in the form of a desire then the soul energy is stopped. When a person gives up all desires, his soul-currents of love emanate with great force. The fullness of life is a state of desirelessness.

A yogi desires salvation, but a lover or a devotee does not want this, and is happy only in the pure love of the Lord. The root of all evils, namely selfishness, is the basis of all evil acts by anyone towards another. But a devotee of the Lord is absorbed only in Him, selflessly. It is impossible for any idea of evil to be entertained by such a person.

- Love brings fearlessness and courage of a high order

The first sign of true love is that the lover becomes free from fear. A lover is happy only when he sacrifices his heart and his life. When one is pierced with love, how can he be afraid of death? The Master acts as a shield for him, so how can the arrows of death pierce him? Such a lover has no fear of anybody except the Beloved.

Even a delicate woman will be prepared to attack a tiger, if she sees her children in danger. How can one be afraid of anything, if he has dedicated his life to love? Where there is fear, love has not yet affected the heart. The first stage of love is fearlessness. Kabir says,

नाम रसायन अधिक रस, पीवत अधिक रसाल ।

कबीर पावन दुलभ है, माँगे सीस कलाल ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 36, पृ० 48)

O Kabir! Only those will be able to drink from the still Well of Love, who will be prepared to sacrifice their heads. No one else will be eligible to drink.

कबीर भाठी प्रेम की, बहुतक बैठे आय ।

सिर सौंपे सो पीवसी, नातर पिया न जाय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 37, पृ० 48)

O Kabir! The cup of love is full of flavour, but to drink it is very difficult because the one who distributes this Wine demands the sacrifice of your head.

The courage of a lover is also of a high order. People generally get tired when they work, but the hands and the feet of a lover are given a unique strength and activity. He does not remain idle.

His heart assumes the greatness of an ocean. He has no worries. For him even impossible things become possible. Every difficult thing becomes easy. Guru Arjan says,

सागर मेर उदिआन बन नव खंड बसुधा भरम ॥

मूसन प्रेम पिरम कै गनउ एक करि करम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तउबोले 5, पृ० 1364)

If the path of love is beset with oceans, mountains, forests and endless deserts – all these appear to be equal to only one step forward on account of love.

A lover does not worry about obstacles in his path. Farid says,

फरीदा गलीए चिकडु दूरि घरु नालि पिआरे नेहु ॥

चला त भिजै कम्बली रहां त तुटै नेहु ॥

भिजउ सिजउ कम्बली अलह वरसउ मेहु ॥

जाइ मिला तिना सजणा तुटउ नाही नेहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1379)

The home of the Beloved is far off. The road which leads to it is filled with mire on account of rain, but the lover has only the thought of the Beloved in his heart. When he walks on such a road his clothes become wet and he even slips at every step on account of the mud. But he does not care and goes forward somehow. He does not want to break the continuity of his love. Then he cries out, 'O God! This rain should be a torrential rain and this blanket of mine should be drenched.' With these words he goes on to meet his Beloved so that his love may not wane.

- Love has a force which imparts increased power of endurance

The force in a lover makes him capable of enduring pain and sorrow. Lovers who have been madly in love, have actually made friends with death. They feel a sense of pleasure in facing troubles, and they may fight all their life against hope but they never waver.

The world of lovers is not easy. Bilwa Mangal was able to ford a river on a dead body, thinking it to be a log of wood, because he was intoxicated with love. He even climbed the roof of his beloved's house by means of a hanging snake, mistaking it to be a piece of rope. The darkness of the night, the torrential rain and the fearful tempest, all faded away before the whirlwind of Bilwa Mangal's madness of love. Manu's love was similarly expressed for Laila. Farhad was the lover of Shirin. They danced attendance from door to door; they fell against stones and had to climb mountains. They even starved for lack of food, but nothing could deter them from their love, till death overtook them. These are examples of the ventures of physical love.

Love is a force greater than any other. Love is energy, which gives power to life. A lover achieves strength to bear all kinds of troubles and tortures. People of the world are unable to bear slander, but a lover becomes indifferent to it. His soul receives such strength, that he does not succumb to any ailment. Love is a perfect remedy for all inner ailments.

- Love comprises service, sacrifice and true subjugation of mind

A mother moves around the bed of her sick child with such devotion that she has no idea of day or night, but she does not complain about her own inconvenience. A child wets the bed but the mother puts the child on the dry side and herself sleeps on the wet side the whole night. She never entertains a feeling of anger or hatred in her mind for the child. A mother may have been hungry for a number of days; she has a little food which she gives to her child, and herself quietly lies down and suffers from starvation. She never complains. She is patient and thankful.

This is the gift of self-sacrifice and subjugation of the mind, which are the sequence of love. People try to control passion, anger, greed, attachment and pride. That is not an easy job, but through true love they are all completely toned down. We bow before such love.

- All things become easy in the presence of love

A person under the influence of love performs the most difficult tasks with comparative ease. Through love, even impossible things become possible. Love knows no burdens. You may have to work very hard. There may be a great burden of responsibilities on your shoulders. But if you clearly understand the law of love, all these difficulties will be performed by love without trouble.

प्रेमी को भार, भार प्रतीत नहीं होता।

He does much who loves much.

If a person loves a certain type of work, he works at it incessantly, because love feels no burden. A lover does not mind burdens and he therefore gladly accomplishes work beyond his capacity. He never complains of his inability to do any work, because he considers himself capable of doing every type of work in the atmosphere of his love. Love gives him such energy, that he does not consider anything impossible.

- A lover pays no heed to public opinion or his own position

In true love all such feelings vanish. The idea of high or low birth also disappears. One who is in love has no connection with such things.

अगर तू आशिके—हुस्ले ओ हुस्न रा जूया,
बगीर खंजरे—तेज ओ बिबुर गुलूए—हया।
हर किह् दर जौके—इश्क रंग आमद,
सख्त फारिग जि नामो—नंग आमद।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 38)

If you are a lover of the Divine Beauty, you should rise above criticism. One who is fully dyed in the colour of love, is unconcerned about all public gossip and opinions.

Hafiz says,

मा नमी ख्वाहम नंगो—नाम रा।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 36)

We do not care for public opinion, nor praise.

Whosoever has dedicated his honour at the Feet of the Lord. will be protected by God Himself. Such devotees are always intoxicated with love and are free from anxiety.

Kabir says,

पीया चाहै प्रेम रस, राखा चाहै मान।
एक म्यान में दो खड़ग, देखा सुना न कान॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 32, पृ० 48)

A person who wishes to taste love and also wants to maintain his fame or honour, should know that these two things cannot stay together – just as two swords cannot be contained in one scabbard. I have not seen such a thing nor have I ever heard of it.

- Love brings to the lover the quality of concealing the bad qualities of others

Love hides all evils and bad things. In a lover's eyes the beloved appears to be pure and free from all evils. He sees the spark of his beloved in everybody. Therefore he talks sweetly to the liking of all. His attention never turns towards the faults or defects of anyone in this world. Why should he then criticize or talk ill of anyone? Criticism is the outcome of the absence of love.

- Lovers are awakened through love, and love's power remains constant

One whose mind has become alive through love is beyond death, and memory of his name lives forever.

There are many other attributes of love. By obtaining or developing love, many virtues are added.

Love, and all things shall be added unto you.

In love, there is unique oneness, happiness, comfort and fulfilment. Through love, one is able to benefit his own self and also his family.

When the mind is filled with love, the ego is destroyed; fear, worry and transmigration of the soul are ended; all mental anguish, all pains and ailments are finished. Illusion (Maya माया), bad acts and evil intellect are also effaced. Desire, restlessness and all the mind's dirt are removed. All longings are fulfilled and devotion is produced. Such a devotee crosses the ocean of life and attains salvation. He is honoured and receives honour in the Presence of the Lord. He achieves the state of Sahaj सहज. Because of the love within himself, God is always his guide. He meets God, and God resides in his heart. The mind becomes satisfied. He goes to his Real Home, and is freed from the cycle of births and deaths.

Love has been described and given a high place in the Sikh Scriptures, and there are numerous verses invoking the spirit of love within. It is suggested that the reader should read them carefully, and by imbibing such love make his life fruitful.



DETACHMENT (*Vairagya* वैराग्य)

Discrimination is a prerequisite on the path of spirituality. It distinguishes between truth and untruth. One must understand the distinction between truth and untruth, between the permanent and the impermanent. It is a quality by which, one can realize the nature of a thing correctly. It produces detachment.

Absence of attachment is detachment. Attachment is another name for longing or desire for material objects or persons. One becomes detached, when he is able to take his attention away from these objects. A person with discrimination knows that this world is impermanent; it is all illusion and subject to dissolution. When detachment is achieved, all these worldly objects and relations lose their importance, and all the ties of attachment are automatically loosened.

Detachment may also be described as non-attachment or disinterest in worldly objects. It is the name of the state of the mind, in which love for anything in this world or the next vanishes.

When the mind is diverted from worldly objects and relations and is attracted towards a higher aim, that is also detachment; in other words, the mind is removed from the worldly longings and is restless in the feeling of separation from the Lord. The awakening of such love is also called detachment.

मनि बैरागु भइआ दरसनु देखणै का चाउ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 50)

My mind has become detached from the world; it longs for God's Darshan.

मेरा मनु तनु बहुतु बैरागिआ हरि नैण रसि भिने ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 449)

My mind and body are sad; my eyes are wet with the Lord's sublime essence.

He alone is detached, who has risen above attachment and is moving towards meeting the Lord by withdrawing completely from all worldly attractions. The Sikh Scriptures call God a Detached Being, because He was never attached to anything, and because such a Being is free from all desire and is never a victim of attachments.

A person appears in this world and then vanishes from sight like a bubble. What happens prior to his birth and after his departure? The desire to know the secrets of this mystery of life arises in the mind of a seeker. In that state, his mind is naturally detached from worldly illusions and he tries to engage himself in a search for a much higher Being. Kabir says,

मोहि बैरागु भइओ ॥ इहु जीउ आइ कहा गइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गोंड भगत कबीर, पृ० 870)

I have become detached, wondering where the soul comes from, and where it goes.

One who is deeply plunged into the world and its attachments can have no detachment. Neither can he achieve the true Detached Being, as long as he is involved in the perplexities of life.

When one is in doubt one cannot achieve anything in this world, nor can one meet God. A person should either remain in the world and be firmly attached to his religious beliefs, or he should detach his mind from everything. If he once becomes detached and then again gets involved in the entanglements of the world, he is a most unfortunate person. There is no advantage in becoming superficially detached by imitating others. Remaining away from Naam and reading Scriptures, going on pilgrimages, or retiring into jungles do not enable one to be attached to real love.

पोथी पंडित बेद खोजंता जीउ ॥ होइ बैरागी तीरथि नावंता जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी माझ म० 5, पृ० 216)

Pundits have been searching for Him in Scriptures. Others become detached and still have desires for bathing in holy waters and going on pilgrimages. Such detached persons even move from one jungle to another in search of Him. Only a rare one from among them is really attached to Him.

The Sanskrit word for spirituality परमार्थ means "Supreme Achievement." One should therefore discriminate between Supreme Achievement and an ordinary benefit. He should follow the path, by which he may get the true, pure and highest benefit. He should eliminate everything that is not necessary and should assimilate the Truth.

Man is a soul in human form, and his connection with the world is through his body. The human body has been given to enable one to perform certain functions in this world.

The soul, being a particle of God, naturally feels happy when it has knowledge of God. But unfortunately man has followed an entirely different path. Saint Augustine says,

It is the great evil of man to desire to enjoy the things, which he ought only to lose, and to lose those which he ought to enjoy.

In fact, everything pertaining to this world should be discarded, and everything pertaining to spirituality should be imbibed. That is real detachment. In order to meet God, one should detach oneself carefully and with discrimination. Then alone will he receive the real benefit; that is, he will be able to rise above the cycle of birth and death.

बूझि बैरागु करे जे कोइ ॥ जनम मरण फिरि सोगु न होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 5, पृ० 1145)

If one acquires detachment of the mind through careful discrimination, he is free from the cycle of birth and death.

In order to be truly detached, it is necessary to be detached from everything in this world. And to do this it is not necessary to leave one's home, society or other connections. Saints do not advocate that type of detachment. The real detachment is to detach one's soul and mind from the love of the world and its objects.

The outward detachment of persons, who are detached from the worldly objects indiscriminately and leave them

outwardly only, can never bring peace. For then, attachment is still felt in the mind, and that cannot be the foundation of the true inner detachment. Such persons again fall victim to the worldly longings. One should, therefore, live in the world in name only – for mere subsistence – and should fix his soul in Naam, in the Master and in God, who are all permanent. (Naam, Master and God are, in fact, one and the same).

Detachment and Renunciation

Detachment and renunciation are entirely distinct and independent of each other. One who is on the path of spirituality need not practice renunciation, but spirituality is not possible without detachment. Renunciation is connected with one's own fate karmas. Raja Janak, Guru Gobind Singh and many other highly evolved souls are examples of perfect detachment, without renunciation. It is written in the Mahabharata that one who has renounced everything and retired into jungles, is liable to the effects of his environment.

When one meets a Perfect Master, then alone will he be able to understand fully the implication and the meaning of true detachment. Then he need not try to run away from the world and leave his household in order to lead a life of detachment.

मन किउ बैरागु करहिगा सतिगुरु मेरा पूरा ॥

मनसा का दाता सभ सुख निधानु अमृत सरि सद ही भरपूरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 375)

O my mind! If you meet a True Master, you need not run out to achieve detachment, because He is the Bestower of all Gifts and is the Treasure of all Comforts, and is the Foundation of Elixir, running at all times to take devotees into life everlasting.

In the company of a Master, the soul of a disciple imbibes the qualities of God and all other tastes in the world become insipid. The devotee is engaged in worldly pursuits, but within himself he is above their ties because of detachment. He lives in the world but he is not a man of the world.

He realizes that God is the highest goal, and he forgets his world in remembrance of Him. So even while living in the world, he cannot forget Him.

The truly detached person knows that one day his own body, his house, his palace and all his worldly property – all attachment – have to be left behind, and nobody knows when this will happen. Therefore, he lives in this world in name only and gives more attention to the purification of his soul, for he does not wish to barter his soul for the sake of this world.

For what is the man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (St. Matthew 16:26, St. Mark 8:36)

Kabir says,

कबीर दीनु गवाइआ दुनी सिउ दुनी न चाली साथि ।।

पाइ कुहाड़ा मारिआ गाफिल अपुनै हाथि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1365)

You have lost your soul in order to love the world, but this world will not accompany you! You have therefore cut your own feet with an axe, like a thoughtless man.

A Master fully imparts the true method of spiritual practice, and also teaches the disciple how to live in this world without attachment. Thus the devotee earns his own living and carries on his household life within proper discipline and under set principles. The devotee also listens to the Sound Current and becomes worthy of attaining salvation.

गुर मिलिऐ नामु पाईऐ चूकै मोह पिआस ।।

हरि सेती मनु रवि रहिआ घर ही माहि उदासु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरिराग म० 3, पृ० 26)

Meeting with the True Guru, Naam is obtained, and the thirst of emotional attachment is eradicated. When the mind is permeated with the Lord, one remains detached within the home of the heart.

नानक सतिगुरि भेटिऐ पूरी होवै जुगति ।।

हसंदिआ खेलंदिआ पैनंदिआ खावंदिआ विचे होवै मुकति ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (ब्रजरी कौ वार म० 5, पृ० 522)

O Nanak! When we meet a True Master one comes to know the Perfect Way. We gain salvation even while experiencing the comforts of life.

What would happen, if one were to leave his hearth and home? The mind would create new ties in a jungle, not only with the surroundings, but also with abstract desires. If one cannot be detached there, where else can it be possible? Actually, detachment is not the renunciation of the objects of the world, but is the renouncing of the strong desires, by which one is attached to this world.

Even if a man should leave his house, his wife, his children, etc., the evil desires already fixed in his mind would not leave him. The mind will create conditions to ensnare him in worldly ties.

As a householder, he had the ties of his house, his wife and his children; and, in the jungle, the different sects, disciples, masters and other social and institutional connections will take hold of him. In his home, he was busy as a householder, but in the jungle he has the additional headache of living on alms. The whole trouble is with the mind. When it is pure and controlled, then only one really becomes detached.

Who is a Detached Person?

When thoughts about the mysteries of life have a strong hold on the mind of some people, they leave this worldly life, renounce their household and become detached. Guru Nanak says,

असंख बैरागी कहहि बैराग सो बैरागी जि खसमै भावै ॥
हिरदै सबदि सदा भै रचिआ गुर की कार कमावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 1, पृ० 634)

Countless renounce the world physically and claim to be detached, but true detachment is that which pleases the Lord. One who is really detached is one who listens to the Shabd (Sound Current, Word) and is filled with the fear of God, and carries out his spiritual discipline accordance with the precepts of his Master.

ना तिसु भूख पिआस मनु मानिआ ॥ सरब निरंजनु घटि घटि जानिआ ॥
अमृत रसि राता केवल बैरागी गुरमति भाइ सुभाइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1039)

He serves the Lord, meditates of Him, accumulates the Treasure of His Name; his thirst and hunger for worldly objects vanish; he feels His presence everywhere; he is fully satisfied with the Elixir of His Name; he is the truly detached person. He achieves this with the Grace of a Master.

One who has reached the stage, where he can see his Master within at will, is always a detached person. He will completely disregard the criticism of others. A truly detached person is one, who has a strong desire to meet the Lord and for whom it is not possible to live without him. He thinks of Him with very breath, and considers life useless without Him.

मनि बैरागु भइआ दरसनु देखणै का चाउ ॥ धनु सु तेरा थानु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 50)

My mind is now detached and I have a strong longing to meet Him. That place is blessed where Thou art.

हमरा मनु बैराग बिरकतु भइओ हरि दरसन मीत कै ताई ॥

जैसे अलि कमला बिनु रहि न सकै तैसे मोहि हरि बिनु रहनु न जाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसावरी म० 4, पृ० 369)

My mind has become detached and a feeling of renunciation has entered in me, because I yearned for the Darshan of my Friend, the Lord. Just as a butterfly cannot live without flowers, I cannot live without God.

प्रिअ प्रीति लागी मिलु बैरागी खिनु रहनु ध्रिगु तनु तिसु बिना ॥

पलका न लागै प्रिअ प्रेम पागै चितवन्ति अनदिनु प्रभ मना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 462)

Having enshrined love in my heart for my Beloved, I have become a renunciate. I cannot sleep without His love, but meeting Him, I become blissful.

A detached person is absorbed in Shabd and is thus truly detached. Other are all on the downward path. The detached person beholds Light within himself and listen to the Shabd. Thereby, his mind is fully attuned to the Lord.

सचै सबदि रते बैरागी होरि भरमि भुले गावारी जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 3, पृ० 1016)

Attuned to the True Word or the Shabd, one remains detached from the outer world. The other ignorant fools wander, confused and deluded by doubt.

मनु बैरागी रतउ बैरागी सबदि मनु बेधिआ मेरी माई ॥

अंतरि जोति निरंतरि बाणी साचे साहिब सिउ लिव लाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 1, पृ० 634)

O my mother! My mind is attached to Shabd and is dyed in detachment. Therefore it has become completely detached. There is Light within, and through that Light comes the Shabd by which my mind is attuned to the True Lord.

Without service to the Master and without contemplation, everything is foggy. No one can cross the ocean of life without Shabd. But whosoever is absorbed in Shabd or Naam, is a really detached person.

बिनु सतिगुर सेवे घोर अंधारा ॥ बिनु सबदै कोइ न पावै पारा ॥

जो सबदि राते महा बैरागी सो सचु सबदे लाहा हे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 3, पृ० 1054)

The world is all illusion without service to the Master. Without Shabd nobody can cross the ocean of this world. He alone is fully detached who is fully engrossed in Shabd, because this Shabd is True.

सबदु गुर पीरा गहिर गंभीरा बिनु सबदै जगु बउरानं ॥

पूरा बैरागी सहजि सुभागी सचु नानक मनु मानं ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 1, पृ० 635)

Shabd is my Master and Shabd is my Spiritual Guide who is as deep as the sea. This world is a desolate land without Shabd. Only a truly detached person can attain the state of Sahaj. So says Nanak, O Ye! Take it as True!

नामि रते सदा बैरागी ॥ गृही अंतरि साचि लिव लागी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 3, पृ० 230)

A person who is absorbed in Naam is always detached. Even when he is leading a householder's life, his mind is attached to the real Truth.

सो साधू बैरागी सोई हिरदै नामु वसाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 29)

He alone is a real detached Sadhu, in whose mind Naam has entered. He who has known himself by attuning himself to Naam, is detached.

A truly detached person rises to the regions above, because true detachment comes after crossing the three Gunas (attributes). Such a person goes to his Home.

आस निरास रहै बैरागी निज घरि ताड़ी लाई ॥

भिखिआ नामि रजे संतोखी अमृतु सहजि पीआई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 1, पृ० 634)

A detached person has his mind fixed on his Home and is free from hope and despair. He is fully satisfied with the gift of Naam and is contented because he has drunk deep from the Ocean of Amrit (Elixir) in the Sahaj.

अनदिनु राता मनु बैरागी सुन मंडलि घरु पाइआ ॥

आदि पुरखु अपरंपरु पियारा सतिगुरि अलखु लखाइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 436)

The mind is day and night detached, and the soul has fixed its abode in the Spiritual Region above Sunn Mandal (Daswan Dwar). It was the magnificent blessing of my Master who gave me the knowledge of Alakh Lok (the Indescribable Region).

He is detached, who is dyed in the colour of God, because his mind is attuned with Naam and he drinks the Nectar of immortality. He follows Hukum (the Will of the Lord); he has true knowledge, and he has destroyed his mind and the mind's desires.

हरि रंगि राता सद बैरागी हरि निकटि तिना घरि आवैगो ॥

तिन की पंक मिलै तां जीवा करि किरपा आपि दिवावैगो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा म० 4, पृ० 1310)

Those who are attuned to the Lord's Love remain balanced and detached forever; they live near the Lord, who resides in their house. If I am blessed with the dust of their feet, then I live. Granting His Grace, He Himself bestows it.

जिनि हुकमु पछाता हरी केरा सोई सरब सुख पावए ॥

इव कहै नानकु सो बैरागी अनदिनु हरि लिव लावए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 440)

Everlasting bliss is enjoyed by those who, by the Grace of the Lord, have recognized the knowledge of Truth. O Nanak! I say only that person is detached who has his mind permanently fused in Him.

Only a Gurumukh is truly detached. He has control over his five senses and has subdued lust and anger as well as his mind.

निरमल जोति निरंजनु पाइआ गुरमुखि भ्रमु भउ भागी ॥
नानक गुरमुखि सदा सुखु पावहि अनदिनु हरि बैरागी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस की वार म० 3, पृ० 590)

A Gurumukh has attained pure Light and all his doubts have vanished. O Nanak! A Gurumukh is always the recipient of joy and he is constantly detached in the Name of God.

इंद्री पंच पंचे वसि आणै खिमा संतोखु गुरमति पावै ॥

सो धनु धनु हरि जनु वड पूरा जो भै बैरागि हरि गुण गावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती 3, पृ० 1334)

Through the Grace of my Master I have conquered all my five senses, and through His Grace also I have acquired the virtues of forgiveness and patience. That person is really worthy of all praise, who sings the praises of the Lord.

जो मनु मारहि आपणा से पुरख बैरागी राम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 3, पृ० 569)

O Ram (God)! He who has subdued his mind is the real detached person.

Such a person, having realized his self, lives desirelessly in the world of desires. His mind is in contemplation day and night. Such a person is really detached and merges in the Lord. One who has renounced all desires and is also free from the attachment of illusion, is detached from all directions and really has detachment ingrained in his mind. Such a person is very fortunate.

With the Grace of God and our karmas, detachment is acquired through a Master by His Satsang and by following his precepts implicitly. One who is gifted by God with the quality of fear, obtains real detachment through that fear.

Detachment is actually a pre-requisite for meeting the Lord. Real detachment is produced, when Shabd is heard within, because then the ties with the world are broken. When one becomes detached the cycle of birth and death is ended; pain, worry and separation will never come; illusion is destroyed and the bliss of Sahaj is attained.

REPETITION OF NAMES (*Jap* जप) & AUSTERITIES (*Tap* तप)

Human birth is obtained only through great good fortune. On getting it, we should follow the spiritual path and the teachings that are preached by the Saints. Human birth is rare. It cannot be had again and again. If we miss this opportunity, we would regret it very much later on.

Kabir says,

कबीर मानस जनमु दुलम्भु है होइ न बारै बार ॥

जिउ बन फल पाके भुइ गिरहि बहुरि न लागहि डार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1366)

O Kabir, human birth is rare and cannot be had again and again; just as fruit which ripens falls to the ground and cannot be restored to the branch. (Kabir)

पउड़ी छुड़की फिरि हाथि न आवै अहिला जनमु गवाइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 3, पृ० 796)

The rung of the ladder from which the hand has slipped cannot be caught again; even so is the human life wasted.

इसु पउड़ी ते जो नरु चूकै सो आइ जाइ दुखु पाइदा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1075)

That being, who misses the chance at this stage, shall suffer the pains of coming and going in reincarnations.

Shams-i-Tabrez also says to the same effect:

हज़ारां करन मी बायद किह् ई दौलत ब—पंश आयद,

कुजा याबम दिगर बारिश अगर ई बर बगुरीज़म ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 233)

Thousands of eons pass before this wealth (human body) is gained. How can I get it again if I let it go this time?

Man is engrossed, body and soul, in this world. He does not think of that other abode, where he will someday go and live.

जो घर छडि गवावणा सो लगा मन माहि ॥
जिथै जाइ तुधु वरतणा तिस की चिंता नाहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 5, पृ० 43)

He is attached to the abode, that he is to leave; for the abode, where he has to go and live forever, he cares not.

It is therefore, necessary that before leaving this world, man should make some provision for the hereafter.

दर पेश सबके सामने मंजिल अजीब है,
गाफिल ब-होश बाश अजल अनकरीब है ।

A journey to a strange land lies ahead of all; O ignorant one, beware, for death is near!

Human birth is the top of creation. It is obtained only by great good fortune. Human birth provides us with an opportunity to meet the Lord. Guru Arjan says,

कई जनम भए कीट पतंगा ॥ कई जनम गज मीन कुरंगा ॥
कई जनम पंखी सरप होइओ ॥ कई जनम हैवर ब्रिख जोइओ ॥
मिलु जगदीस मिलन की बरीआ ॥ चिरंकाल इह देह संजरीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडड़ी गुआरेरी म० 5, पृ० 176)

For many incarnations was I a moth or insect. For many incarnations was I an elephant, a fish, or a deer. For many incarnations was I a serpent or a bird. For so many incarnations, I was yoked as an ox or a horse. Now is an opportunity to meet the Lord; this body of glory has been obtained after long ages.

भई परापति मानुख देहुरीआ ॥ गोबिंद मिलन की इह तेरी बरीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 378)

Having been blessed with the human body, this is the chance to meet the Lord of the Universe.

Nothing is gotten free in this world. Of course, those in whose heart the fire of love is raging, need not do anything. Until such time as one obtains this wealth, he should make an effort and hold out his palms to receive. Shams-i-Tabrez says that if you have not developed yearning for the Lord, you should remain busy in remembering Him, for the Lord does not withhold wages from the labourer.

चू नीस्त इश्क़ तुरा बंदगी बजा मी आर,
किह हक्क़ फ़िरोहल्द मुज्दहा-ए-मजदूरां ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 304)

Since you have no love, worship Him, for He would not hold back the wages of the labourers.

The Lord knows how to sustain and support His creatures.

साहिब के दरबार में, कमी काहु की नाँहि।

बन्दा मौज न पावहीं, चूक चाकरी माँहि॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ भाग-2 (सेवक को अंग 16, पृ० 101)

In the Court of the Lord there is no dearth of anything. If there is anything wanting, it is our own service. It is because of this that we do not get His Grace. (Kabir Sahib)

Maulana Rumi says that the ferment becomes wine, only after it has matured for a long time in the vat. If you wish to be intoxicated with divine love, you should engage yourself in spiritual practice.

मै मी नगरदद शीरा दर खुम बजोशद मुद्दे,

ख्वाही किह् दिल रोशन शवद अंदक अमल बायद तुरा।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज (पृ० 5)

The ferment does not become wine until after it matures in the vat for a long time. If you wish your heart to be illuminated, you should practice for a long time.

Offer your mind at the altar of His beauty and become desireless. The Lord Himself will then find some means of redeeming you. In order to offer their minds, people perform many repetitions of names (*Japs*) and austerities (*Tap*), practice self-discipline, fasts, pilgrimages and so forth, so as to generate love for the Lord. If one offers his heart sincerely to the Lord, He who is the source of mercy, becomes kind and creates means for redeeming the offerer.

The nature of repetition of names and austerities is considered in detail below.

Jap जप - Repetition of Names

Jap means repetition. Mantras are set forms of words. It includes the mastery of mantras (mantra-siddhi मन्त्र-सिद्धि) as well as the method of succeeding in its practice. The aim of these methods is to touch the feet of the Lord. They are of five kinds: repetition (*Jap* जप); offerings in fire (*Homa* होम); water

oblations offered to ancestors (*Tarpan* तर्पण); special prayers to deities (*Abhishek* अभिषेक); feeding of Brahmins (*Brahm Bhog* ब्रह्म भोग).

According to the scriptures, mantras are repeated for attaining various desires. They are practiced in several ways. Sometimes, a mantra is added both before and after another mantra, as in 'Om Ram Om ॐ राम ॐ' (*Samput* सम्पुट). Sometimes a mantra is read as it is, as 'Om Namah Rama ॐ नमः राम' (*Anulom* अनुलोम).

Sometimes, it is repeated in the reverse order, as 'Rama Namah Om' (*Vilom* विलोम). Similarly, various other methods are adopted, each leading to different results. In this way, various powers are said to be acquired through the practice of mantras relating to Bhairon, Kali, Lakshmi, Hanuman and various other gods and goddesses. These mantras are called a Bhairon shield (*Bhairon Kawach* भैरों कवच), Kali Shield (*Kali Kawach* काली कवच), Durga Shield (*Durga Kawach* दुर्गा कवच), etc. They are said to protect the body, just as a coat of mail protects the arms and body of a warrior. But in the various hymns of the Gurus, the Name of the in-dwelling Lord is described as the shield of the devotees.

राम कवचु दास का संनाहु ॥ दूत दुसट तिसु पोहत नाह ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गोंड म० 5, पृ० 868)

The Lord's protective spell is the armour of His slave; the wicked, evil demons cannot even touch him.

चउगिरद हमारै राम कार दुखु लगै न भाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 819)

I am surrounded by the Lord's Circle of Protection; pain does not afflict me, O my brother.

To get the benefit of the Jewel of Ram Naam राम-नाम (the Name of God) is the purpose of repetition (*Jap*). The four Vedas all point out that the treasure of salvation lies in the Name of the Lord (*Ram Naam*), and to find the treasure is the purpose of all repetition (*Jap*).

लाहा नामु रतनु जपि सारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 931)

The priceless Jewel of the Name is the essence of all repetition.

चतुरथि चारे बेद सुणि सोधिओ ततु बीचारु ॥

सरब खेम कलिआण निधि राम नामु जपि सारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडी शिती म० 5, पृ० 297)

Listening to the four Vedas and contemplating the essence of reality, I have come to realize that the treasure of all joy and comfort is found in sublime repetition of the Lord's Name.

For this reason, stress is laid in the hymns of the Saints on the repetition of the immortality-giving Name.

अमृत नामु जपउ जपु रसना ॥ अमोल दासु करि लीनो अपना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडी सोरठ भगत कबीर, पृ० 331)

Repeat the Nectar of Naam, O tongue, for It makes the humble devotee its own. (Kabir)

What is this Repetition? This repetition is the Lord Himself. He is also the reciter. This recitation is Nectar personified.

आपे नाउ जपाइदा पिआरा आपे ही जपु जापै ॥

आपे अमृतु आपि है पिआरा आपे ही रसु आपै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 4, पृ० 605)

He Himself makes us repeat, and He does the repetition Himself. He Himself is the Nectar, He is the dear one, and He Himself is the taste of the Nectar.

The repetition of the Name of the Lord is the essence of happiness and its remembrance is the highest flight of thought. With such repetition, human life becomes successful. The mind becomes satisfied, when it drinks this water of immortality and attains everlasting life.

उदमु करत आनदु भइआ सिमरत सुख सारु ॥

जपि जपि नामु गोबिंद का पूरन बीचारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 815)

These efforts result in bliss, for remembrance is the essence of happiness. Therefore repeat the Name of the Lord, the essence of wisdom.

जीवना सफल जीवन सुनि हरि जपि जपि सद जीवना ॥

पीवना जितु मनु आघावै नामु अमृत रसु पीवना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1019)

Life is fruitful when it hears the Name of the Lord. Recitation leads to a happy life. Drinking the Nectar of the Name satisfies the mind.

Those on whom the Lord showers His Grace, repeat His Name.

जिस नो कृपा करे सो धिआवै ॥ नित हरि जपु जापै जपि हरि सुखु पावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 4, पृ० 998)

He who obtains His Grace is the one who contemplates. He ever recites the Name of the Lord and by this he finds happiness

It is mentioned in the hymns of the Gurus that of all the paths, the best path or the purest action is to repeat the Lord's Name.

सरब धरम महि स्रेसट धरमु ॥ हरि को नामु जपि निरमल करमु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 266)

The best of all religions (Dharma) is the pure action of repeating the Name of the Lord.

The Lord is unknowable and unfathomable. Man has only a very limited capacity, and without the Master's help is not competent to perform his repetition (*Jap*) or to understand Him.

जप तप संजम इस ते किछु नाही ॥ आदि अंति प्रभ अगम अगाही ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1005)

Nothing can be gained from repetition, austerity or self-control without the Master's help. From the very beginning, the Lord is unknowable and unfathomable.

सोई जपु जो प्रभ जीउ भावै भाणै पूर गिआना जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 100)

That which pleases the Lord is chanting; to be in harmony with His Will is perfect spiritual wisdom.

The technique of remembrance and repetition of the Name of God is obtained by the company of the Master (Guru). It is only through the Grace of the Lord, that man sings His praises and can continue to do so.

हरि हरि भजनु पूरे गुर संगि ॥ जपि तरीऐ नानक नाम हरि रंगि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी थिती म० 5, पृ० 298)

Remember the Lord in the company of the Master, O Nanak! Repetition brings salvation by dyeing one in the colour of His Name.

सदा सदा गुण गाईअहि जपि नामु मुरारी ।।

नेमु निबाहिओ सतिगुरु प्रभि किरपा धारी ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 399)

Let us always sing the praises of the Lord. You have always enabled us to do so, O Master and merciful Lord.

Tap तप - Austerities

The meaning of Tap is to undergo physical or mental hardship or to perform any practice that removes egotism. It is called Riyazat in Persian. To live in jungles and subsist on roots and fruits, sitting in fire, exposing oneself to five fires पंच-तप (to sit with fire on all sides, and to bear the heat of the sun from above, as the fifth fire), to lie on nails fixed in the ground, to remain standing with one hand raised, to sit in water and to undergo other physical and mental sufferings are called Tap (austerities). The purpose of performing these austerities is that the mind may become pure, and that lust, anger, attachment, greed and egotism may be removed so that realization of the Lord may be attained. Many persons leave their homes owing to domestic troubles and in order to escape responsibilities. They leave their homes and go to other places and put on ochre coloured clothes; but lust, anger, attachment, greed and egotism accompany them.

पूअर ताप गेरी के बसत्रा ।। अपदा का मारिआ गृह ते नसता ।।

देसु छोडि परदेसहि धाइआ ।। पंच चंडाल नाले लै आइआ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 5, पृ० 1348)

One donns ochre robes and warms oneself by the side of smouldering fire; and stung by worries, one abandons the household; and forsaking one's country, one wanders in foreign lands. But, one carries within the five demons wherever one goes.

In the religion of the Saints, no importance is attached to austerities that cause pain to the body, since by exposing the body to water and fire the inner fire is not extinguished, nor by keeping the hand raised, is egotism removed.

अंतरि अगनि न गुर बिनु बूझै बाहरि पूअर तापै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1013)

The inner fire is not extinguished without a Master, however much one may expose oneself to outer fire.

काइआ साथै उरध तपु करै विचहु हउमै न जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 33)

By practicing ascetism or exposing oneself to the heat of the sun, the ego will not be eliminated from within.

हटु निग्रहु करि काइआ छीजै ॥ वरतु तपनु करि मनु नही भीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 905)

By practicing Hath Yoga the body becomes weak. The mind is not calmed by fasts and austerities.

Sheikh Farid says,

तनु तपै तनूर जिउ बालणु हड बलन्हि ॥

पैरी थकां सिरि जुलां जे मूं पिरी मिलन्हि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1384)

I would heat the body like an oven or feed the fire with my bones, and walk on my head when my feet become tired, if I could but meet my Beloved. (Farid)

It is not necessary to heat the body like an oven or to burn one's bones. The head and feet have done you no wrong. The Lord is inside you. Turn inwards.

तनु न तपाइ तनूर जिउ बालणु हड न बालि ॥

सिरि पैरी किआ फेड़िआ अंदरि पिरी सम्हालि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वहीक म० 1, पृ० 1411)

Do not heat the body like an oven or burn your bones like fuel. The head and feet have done no wrong. Instead, see the Lord within.

If one's goal can be achieved without causing suffering to the body, then why undergo such suffering? Kabir Sahib says,

खिंथा गिआन धिआन करि सूई सबदु तागा मथि घालै ॥

पंच ततु की करि मिरगाणी गुर के मारगि चालै ॥

दइआ फाहुरी काइआ करि धूई द्रिसटि की अगनि जलावै ॥

तिस का भाउ लए रिद अंतरि चहु जुग ताड़ी लावै ॥

सभ जोगतण राम नामु है जिस का पिंडु पराना ॥

कहु कबीर जे किरपा धारै देइ सचा नीसाना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा भगत कबीर, पृ० 477)

He who follows the path taught by the Master wears the coat of knowledge stitched with the needle of meditation and the thread

of Shabd. Making the five elements his deer skin to sit on, he walks on the Guru's Path. He uses compassion as a rake and the body as firewood, and ignites the fire of the eye centre. He bears love for Him in his heart and contemplates in trance on all the four yugas (ages). All yoga is included in the Name of the Lord, to whom belong this body and life. O Kabir! When He has compassion, He leads him to the true ideal. (Kabir)

Gurus describe the real austerities, through which the cycle of birth and death is ended and the soul reaches the door of the Master. The greatest of the austerities is the Master's service, through which the Lord dwells in the heart. In this way one reaches the door of the Master.

गुर सेवा तपां सिरि तपु सारु ॥ हरि जीउ मनि वसै सभ दूख विसारणहारु ॥
दरि साचै दीसै सचिआरु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 423)

The Master's service is the best of all austerities. The Lord dwells in the heart of the man who performs such service and discards all his sufferings. He sees the Lord as the Door of the Truth.

The Gurus say that the true ascetic is he, who has obtained the company of the Saints.

सो तपसी जिसु साधसंगु ॥ सद धिआनी जिसु गुरहि रंगु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत म० 5, पृ० 1180)

He is the true ascetic, who has the company of the Saints and is dyed in the hue of the Master.

He who withdraws his mind and senses from the pleasures of the senses and puts them in the service of the Master is a real ascetic. But if he is false of mind, always tells lies, runs after illusion (Maya माया), calls himself an ascetic, but acts dishonestly, performs pilgrimages to all the sacred places, but has not controlled the mind and the senses, he will make no spiritual progress and will not gain salvation.

मन का झूठा झूठु कमावै ॥ माइआ नो फिरै तपा सदावै ॥

भरमे भूला सभि तीरथ गहै ॥ ओहु तपा कैसे परम गति लहै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 3, पृ० 948)

The false-hearted man earns falsehood. He runs after Maya and calls himself an ascetic. Steeped in ignorance, he visits all the sacred places. How can such an ascetic gain salvation?

Of course, if with a sincere heart, with clean intentions, and through the kindness of the Master, such a one perseveres in the truth, he will then give up his wanderings outside and will get inner bliss and salvation. These austerities alone should be practiced because they alone lead to salvation.

गुर परसादी को सचु कमावै ॥ नानक सो तपा मोखंतरु पावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 3, पृ० 948)

With the Grace of the Master, attain Truth; O Nanak, such an ascetic attains salvation.

अनभउ अचरज रूपु प्रभ पेखिआ मेरा मनु छोडि न कतहू जाइआ था ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1002)

I have given up searching outside, for the Master showed me the Lord inside. I realized the wonderful Form of the Lord, and my mind no longer wanders.

The Effect of the Iron Age - Kali Yuga

The Iron Age has still a long time to last. Man is feeble. No one can properly do right actions. Dharma (duties), charity, pilgrimages and true austerities cannot be practiced. An adverse wind is blowing. He who practices the Name, gets a bad name. Those, who indulge in an outward show of piety or practice hypocrisy, are considered to be respectable.

कितै देसि न आइआ सुणीऐ तीरथ पासि न बैठा ॥

दाता दानु करे तह नाही महल उसारि न बैठा ॥

जे को सतु करे सो छीजे तप घरि तपु न होई ॥

जे को नाउ लए बदनावी कलि के लखण ईई ॥

- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 902)

Kali Yuga is neither found in a particular land, nor at a pilgrim-station. Nor is it in a set-mansion, and certainly is not where men practice charity. Whosoever practices truth in this age, loses and his austerities bear no fruit. Moreover whosoever utters the Lord's Name is defamed: These are the signs by which Kali Yuga is known.

In this age, all the world is indulging in selfishness owing to the restlessness of the mind, no one can properly devote

himself to repetition of sacred names (*Jap*), austerities (*Tap*), or fasts or worships, and people are spoiling their chances of happiness in their future life, by forgetting the Name.

किआ जपु किआ तपु किआ ब्रत पूजा ॥ जा कै रिदै भाउ है दूजा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी भगत कबीर, पृ० 324)

Repetition of mantras (Jap), austerities (Tap), fasts or worship are of no avail to one who has a feeling of otherness from the Lord. (Kabir)

नानक नावहु घुथिआ हलतु पलतु सभु जाइ ॥

जपु तपु संजमु सभु हिरि लइआ मुठी दूजै भाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ की वार म० 3, पृ० 648)

O Nanak, forsaking the Name, one loses everything in this world and the next. Chanting and austere self-disciplined practices are all wasted; one is deceived by the love of duality.

Unless one gets the correct method from the Master and develops true love and devotion, all his repetition, austerities, self-control, fasts and holy baths are in vain.

किआ जपु किआ तपु संजमो किआ बरतु किआ इसनानु ॥

जब लगु जुगति न जानीऐ भाउ भगति भगवान ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पुरखी भगत कबीर, पृ० 337)

What use are repetitions, austerities, self-discipline, fasts or baths in sacred streams, unless one knows the way of Loving Devotion to the Lord. (Kabir)

In the Iron Age, the outer repetition of mantras and the practice of austerities do not lead to salvation. The repetition of mantras, austerities, self-control, fasts, worship and so forth do not eradicate the feeling of egotism. The soul is entangled in the cleverness of the mind and the jungle of Maya. It does not find the way of escape from these snares.

जपु तप संजम वरत करे पूजा मनमुख रोगु न जाई ॥

अंतरि रोगु महा अभिमाना दूजै भाइ खुआई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 732)

Repetition, austerities and self-discipline practiced by an egocentric man do not cure his malady. Deep within him is the sickness of excessive egotism; in the love of duality he is ruined.

सभि जप सभि तप सभ चतुराई ॥ ऊझड़ि भरमै राहि न पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 412)

All repetitions, austerities and cleverness lead only to wandering in the wilderness.

In the Iron Age, no action or ritual except the practice of Naam leads to salvation.

कलजुग कर्म धर्म नहिं कोई । नाम बिना उद्धार न होई ।

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (38:3:11, पृ० 337)

In the Iron Age, no action or ritual is of any avail; except for the practice of Naam, there is no other way.

The lure of the senses is very strong and widespread. The ascetic and the pundit, lured by austerities and greed, remain separated from the Lord.

तपु करते तपसी भूलाए ॥ पंडित मोहे लोभि सबाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 370)

The ascetics are led astray by austerities and the pundits by greed.

बिखु बिखिआ पसरी अति घनी ॥ उबरे जपि जपि हरि गुनी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 210)

The poison of Maya is spread far and wide, but he who practices repetition rises and realizes.

Unless Maya is destroyed, hundreds of actions, the repetition of mantras and the practice of austerities are of no account.

इसु मारी बिनु थाइ न परै ॥ कोटि करम जाप तप करै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 238)

Without destroying Maya one gets nowhere, no matter what he may do in the way of countless actions, repetitions or austerities.

The repetition of mantras, the practice of austerities, fasts and self-control and the making of pilgrimages do not lead to peace of mind. Peace of mind comes only after one takes refuge with the Master or the Lord.

जप तप बरत कीने पेखन कउ चरणा राम ॥

तपति न कतहि बुझै बिनु सुआमी सरणा राम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़ा म० 5, पृ० 545)

I practiced repetition, austerities and fasts to see the feet of the Lord. But the fire cannot be extinguished without taking refuge in the Lord.

What are True Repetition, Austerities and Self-Control?

The teachings of the Saints say that only those repetitions, austerities and services are beneficial, which are dear to the Lord. They remove the feeling of selfishness and separateness.

सो जपु तपु सेवा चाकरी जो खसमै भावै ॥

आपे बखसे मेलि लए आपतु गवावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग की वार म० 3, पृ० 1247)

Only that repetition, austerity and service is approved which is dear to the Lord. It is He, who forgives and unites to Himself and removes egotism.

The Lord is manifested in the Master. Therefore, obedience to Him is true repetition, austerities and self-control. The purpose of all austerities and self-control is to develop the soul (*surat* सुरत).

This development can only be achieved through the Grace of the Master. This is dear to the Lord. Such service is fruitful.

जपु तपु संजमु भाणा सतिगुरु का करमी पलै पाइ ॥

नानक सेवा सुरति कमावणी जो हरि भावै सो थाइ पाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 88)

Repetition, austerities, self-discipline and obedience to the Master are to be performed by the devotee. O Nanak, service is done to develop the soul. This alone is acceptable to the Lord, and one then finds Reality.

For this reason, the service of the Master is superior to all austerities. As a result of this, the Lord dwells in the heart of the seeker and he forgets all hardships.

गुर सेवा तपां सिरि तपु सारु ॥ हरि जीउ मनि वसै सभ दूख विसारणहारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 423)

The Master's service is the best of all austerities. When the Lord's Name dwells in the heart, It removes all sufferings.

It is said that remembrance of the Lord and His dwelling in the heart constitute repetition, austerities and self-control.

प्रभ कै सिमरनि जप तप पूजा ॥ प्रभ कै सिमरनि बिनसै दूजा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमती म० 5, पृ० 262)

Included in the remembrance of God are chanting, austerities and devotional worship. In the remembrance of God, duality is eliminated.

नामु रतनु जिनि गुरमुखि पाइआ ता की पूरन घाला ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 615)

He, in whose mind dwells the Lord, is the man who practices repetition, austerities and self-discipline, and who is the knower of the essence of things. The life of the disciple, who has the Jewel of the Name, is indeed perfect.

The real austerity consists in finding the Master and practicing the Yoga of the Sound Current (Surat-Shabd Yoga सुरत-शब्द योग). There is no other true repetition or austerity or self-control. The Sound Current or Shabd is within all persons, and is only obtained through the direction of the Master. Action, duties, purity, self-control, repetition and austerities are all based on the Shabd or inner Sound. The essence of all repetition and austerities is the Divine Sound.

सो तपा जि इहु तपु घाले ॥ सतिगुर नो मिलै सबदु समाले ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 948)

He alone is a man of disciplined meditation, who practices this austerity: meeting with the True Guru, he contemplates the Word.

जपु तपु संजमु होरु कोई नाही ॥ जब लगु गुर का सबदु न कमाही ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 3, पृ० 1060)

There is no true repetition, austerity or self-discipline, unless one practices the Shabd as taught by the Master.

अंतरि जपु तपु संजमो गुर सबदी जापै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 3, पृ० 1092)

Repetition, austerities and self-discipline are obtained when one practices the Shabd given by the Master.

सगले करम धरम सुचि संजम जप तप तीरथ सबदि वसे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 1, पृ० 1332)

All actions, duties, true self-discipline, repetition, austerities and pilgrimages dwell in the Shabd.

ता को पावै मोख दुआरु ॥ जपु तपु सभु इहु सबदु है सारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 1, पृ० 661)

He who has the Shabd finds the door of salvation. In Shabd is contained the essence of all repetitions and austerities.

The Name नाम or Shabd शब्द is superior to all practices such as charities or donations, repetition or austerities. A person may go to Banaras and practice austerities there, or may hang upside down or may expose his body to fire, or may practice ascetism, or may perform the horse sacrifice, or may give gold in charity. He may do various repetitions and austerities. He may study all the religious books (Dharma Shastras धर्म-शास्त्र and Smritees स्मृति). He may do various good acts and duties, observe fasts, and engage in internal introspection and contemplation. He may leave his home and wander in the forests, but none of these can equal the practice of the Lord's Name (Ram Naam राम-नाम):

पुनं दान जप तप जेते सभ ऊपरि नामु॥

हरि हरि रसना जो जपै तिसु पूरन कामु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 401)

The Name is superior to donations, charity and austerities. The tongue that remembers the Lord leads one to fulfilment.

बानारसी तपु करै उलटि तीरथ मरै अग्नि दहै काइआ कलपु कीजै॥

असुमेध जगु कीजै सोना गरभ दानु दीजै राम नाम सरि तरु न पूजै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली भगत नामदेव, पृ० 973)

If one practices austerities at Banaras and dies while hanging upside down at a sacred spot, or sits near fire or rejuvenates himself or performs the Ashvamedha Yagna (horse sacrifice) or gives gold in sealed covers, all this does not equal the sacred practice of the Lord's Name. (Namdev)

नही तुलि राम नाम बीचार॥ नानक गुरमुखि नामु जपीऐ इक बार॥

जाप ताप गिआन सभि धिआन॥ खट सासत्र सिमृति वखिआन॥

जोग अभिआस करम ध्रम किरिआ॥ सगल तिआगि बन मधे फिरिआ॥

अनिक प्रकार कीऐ बहु जतना॥ पुनं दान होमे बहु रतना॥

सरिरु कटाइ होमै करि राती॥ वरत नेम करै बहु भाती॥

नही तुलि राम नाम बीचार॥ नानक गुरमुखि नामु जपीऐ इक बार॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडड़ी सुखमणी म० 5, पृ० 265)

Repetitions, austerities, knowledge and contemplation, reading the six shastras and commentaries on them, performing of yoga practices, actions and duties, or wandering in the forests without performing any action, do not equal the remembrance of the

Lord. O Nanak, it is sufficient for the beloved of the Guru simply to repeat the Name.

Sincere love is the essence of all repetitions and austerities. He, whose mind is pure and who contemplates with love and devotion on the feet of the Lord, must be considered to have performed all repetitions and austerities.

मनु तनु निरमलु होइआ लागी साचु परीति ॥

चरण भजे पारब्रह्म के सभि जप तप तिन ही कीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 5, पृ० 48)

He whose heart and body are pure, who loves truly, and meditates on the feet of the Great Lord, must be considered as having performed all repetitions and austerities.

Love is preferable to all repetitions, austerities, self-discipline, rapture, delight, honour and sacred knowledge.

जप तप संजम हरख सुख मान महत अरु गरब ॥

मूसन निमखक प्रेम परि वारि वारि देंउ सरब ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तउबोले म० 5, पृ० 1364)

Chanting, intense meditation, austere self-discipline, pleasure, honour, greatness and pride – O Musan, I would dedicate and sacrifice all these for a moment of my Lord's Love.

Real repetition, austerities and worship are those which lead to Love for the Lord. Love for the Lord is real. All else is false.

सो जपु सो तपु सा ब्रत पूजा जितु हरि सिउ प्रीति लगाइ ॥

बिनु हरि प्रीति होर प्रीति सभ झूठी इक खिन महि बिसरि सभ जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बैराडी म० 4, पृ० 720)

That repetition, that austerity, that fast and that worship is true, which increases one's love for the Lord. Without love for the Lord, every other love is false and is forgotten in a moment.

How real Repetition and Austerities are Practiced and their Fruit

The repetition and austerities, which are related to the practice of Naam, depend upon the Grace of the Lord. Only he, on whom the Lord bestows them, can have them.

जपु तपु संजमु नामु सम्हालिआ ॥ अपुनै ठाकुरि नदरि निहालिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 5, पृ० 1348)

The Name contains repetitions, austerities and self-discipline. My Lord and Master has blessed me with His Glance of Grace.

जपु तपु संजमु दइआ धरमु जिसु देहि सु पाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 966)

Repetitions, austerities, self-discipline, compassion and duties are practiced by those, who are blessed by Him.

The company of the Saints is gained through the Grace of the Lord. The devotees of the Saints repeat the blessed Name of the Lord.

जिन्ह कउ भए दइआल तिन्ह साधू संगु भइआ ॥

अमृतु हरि का नामु तिन्ही जनी जपि लइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 762)

They alone join the Sadh Sangat, unto whom the Lord becomes Merciful. They chant and meditate upon the Ambrosial Name of the Lord.

The Grace of the Lord descends through a Saint or God-man. It is only through Him that repetition, austerities and self-discipline can be successful. With the help of a Saint, Naam resides in the heart and the devotee finds a place at the Door of the Lord.

जपु तपु संजमु सभु गुर ते होवै हिरदै नामु वसाई ॥

नानक नामु समालहि से जन सोहनि दरि सावै पति पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 3, पृ० 602)

Repetitions, austerities and self-discipline are obtained through the Guru by one, in whose heart dwells the Name. O Nanak, those humble beings who praise the Naam, are beautiful; they are honoured in the Court of the True Lord.

He who finds a Master may be considered to have performed all austerities, fasts and pilgrimages. No effort, cleverness or other form of striving is of any avail. The main thing is to find a Master. All repetitions, austerities, purity and self-control depend on His Will. Those, for whom He wills it, can do them.

तह तीरथ वरत तप सारे ॥ गुर मिलिआ हरि निसतारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 879)

Pilgrimages, fasts and austerities are all dispensed with by the Lord, when one meets a Master.

घाल सिआणप उकति न मेरी पूरै गुरु कमाई ॥
जप तप संजम सुचि है सोई आपे करे कराई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 915)

No effort, wisdom or artifice is of any avail. It is all provided by the Perfect Master. He alone does the chanting, meditation, austere self-discipline and purification. He Himself acts, and causes us to act.

It is only when the Lord is merciful that, through the Grace of the Master, the full fruits of repetitions, austerities and self-discipline are obtained.

जप तप संजम पूरी वडिआई ॥ गुर किरपाल हरि भए सहाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 196)

Repetitions, austerities, self-discipline and true greatness are obtained by the Grace of the Master and the help of the Lord.

For this reason, service of the Master is the highest form of austerity. By serving the Master with body, mind and soul, the Lord resides in the heart and all worldly cares are destroyed.

गुर सेवा तपां सिरि तपु सारु ॥ हरि जीउ मनि वसै सभ दूख विसारणहारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 423)

Service of the Master is the best of all austerities. The Lord then dwells in them and all sufferings are ended.

The Lord of Death bows at the feet of those who repeat the Name according to the directions and instructions of the Master, and they are looked after by the Lord.

जिनि जपु जपिओ सतिगुर मति वा के ॥ जमकंकर कालु सेवक पग ता के ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1042)

He who repeats the Name, gets wisdom from the Master. The messengers of death are like pebbles under his feet.

सतिगुरु आखै सु कार कमावनि सु जपु कमावहि गुरसिखां की घाल सचा थाइ पावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी की वार म० 4, पृ० 317)

The True Lord accepts the service of His GurSikhs. As the True Guru directs them, they do their work and chant their prayers.

There can be no repetition, austerities or self-control, unless the pleasures of the senses are given up. This can only be done by controlling the ten apertures of the body and by repetition of the Name.

बिखै बिकार दुसट किरखा करे इन तजि आतमै होइ धिआई ॥

जपु तपु संजमु होहि जब राखे कमलु बिगसै मधु आस्रमाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 23)

He who gives up sense pleasures and evil deeds and contemplates on the soul, his repetition, austerities and self-discipline bear fruit. When chanting, meditation and self-discipline become your protectors, then the lotus blossoms forth, and the honey trickles out.

दसमी दस दुआर बसि कीने ॥ मनि संतोखु नाम जपि लीने ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी शिती म० 5, पृ० 298)

He who controls all the ten doors is contented of heart and repeats the Name.

These repetitions and austerities are obtained by sincere devotees through good fortune. Such a one becomes free from all ailments, and is immersed in ecstasy day and night.

नानक राम नामु जपि गुरमुखि हरि पाए मसतकि भागा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 1, पृ० 598)

O Nanak, by repeating the Names the sincere devotees realize the Lord.

गुरमुखि जपि सभि रोग गवाइआ अरोगत भए सरीरा ॥

अनदिनु सहज समाधि हरि लागी हरि जपिआ गहिर गंभीरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 4, पृ० 574)

By repetition of the Name the devotee is rid of ailments and his body becomes healthy. He daily contacts the Lord in trance, while absorbed in deep meditation on His Name.

नानक भगता भली रीति ॥ सुखदाता जपदे नीत नीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वसंत म० 5, पृ० 1184)

He is the true devotee, ascetic and house-holder, who constantly remembers the Lord and thereby gets the gift of repetitions, austerities and self-discipline. O Nanak, the true devotee repeats the peace-giving Name in the approved manner.

सो गिरही जो निग्रहु करै ॥ जपु तपु संजमु भीखिआ करै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 1, पृ० 952)

He is the true house-holder who controls himself and gets the gifts of repetitions, austerities and self-discipline.

Remembrance of the Lord and praise of His Name lead to various benefits, according to the Gurus. All desires,

ignorance and cares are destroyed, and death and rebirth end. All good intentions are fulfilled. The heart is filled with happiness, bliss and joys. The lotus opens and egotism disappears. The fear of death is overcome and one does not go to hell. He crosses the world of phenomena in safety. The Lord is seen everywhere and in everything. One not only crosses the world himself, but takes others also along with him. He is saved from the depredations of the five robbers (the senses), and attains the stage of easy and natural trance in meditation (Sahaj avastha सहज अवस्था). He is beholden to the Lord. The remembrance of the Master is remembrance of the Lord. The True Gurus, therefore, take care to explain the benefits of remembrance of the Master.

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HYGIENE (*Shauch* शौच)

All the religions place emphasis on observing cleanliness. Amongst the Hindus, purity or cleanliness is the last rule of the eightfold yoga (Ashtanga Yoga अष्टांग योग) and some other yogas. In preparing for the eightfold yoga, the body is cleaned in various ways:

- **Nasal Douche** (Neti Karma नेती कर्म). A piece of thin cotton cord is softened by dipping it in some fat. One end is inserted in one nostril and is then passed out through the other nostril. The two ends are then pulled up and down. By this process, the inner nasal region is cleaned.

- **Cloth Stomach Douche** (Dhauti Karma धौती कर्म): A bandage of fine cloth 3 to 5 inches wide and 10 to 20 yards long is used. It is wetted with water. A portion of it is daily swallowed until the whole can be swallowed. The upper end is held firmly by the teeth. The cloth is then slowly taken out. The internal part of the stomach is cleaned by this process.

- **Enema** (Basti Karma बस्ती कर्म): In this process, one sits in water up to his navel. A hollow bamboo stick about one finger broad and four fingers long is passed up the anus. Water is drawn up through the stick and then thrown out. The internal portion below the stomach is thus cleaned. In a way, it is like taking an enema.

- **Intestinal Douche** (Nauli Karma नौली कर्म): In this process, one sits with his shoulders level and back straight. The stomach is drawn in and the intestine is churned from right to left. The inner air is expelled and the inside is cleaned.

- **Stomach Water Douche** (Gajakarani Karma गजकरणी कर्म): In this process, one drinks as much water as one can and then

vomits it out through the mouth. By this the inside is washed clean.

- **Sex Organ Douche** (Vajroli Karma वज्रोली कर्म): In this process, water is drawn through the penis and is then expelled. The inside is thus cleaned.

After performing these processes, a yogi practices fixation of the gaze. In this practice, the gaze is first fixed on the tip of the nose, and is then withdrawn to its root. When this practice is perfected, the attention is taken to the inner chakras. By this practice, divine sight is obtained.

The thoughts of other persons can be read and the foundation is laid for access to finer regions. By this practice, the obstruction of Bhujangam भुजंगम or Kundalini Nadi कुण्डलिनी नाडी to Sushumna Nadi सुषुम्ना नाडी is removed. The tongue is lengthened until it can touch the eyebrows. It is then taken inside and is used to close or plug the palate. The nectar, which drops from the moon, which is seen on the left side of the region of Trikuti त्रिकुटी is then enjoyed.

Gurus do not say that the performing of these acts results in salvation. All of them, in fact, are considered to be useless, if one does not practice devotion to the Lord. The Gurus say that even if one does all the six practices to perfection, but has no devotion to the Lord, he is like a sweeper. No knowledge is obtained without a Master. The follower of these practices still remains drowned in ignorance. In spite of all this purification, the inner defect is not removed. Without Naam नाम these acts are no more than the feats of mystery-mongers.

खटु करम कुल संजुगतु है हरि भगति हिरदै नाहि ॥

चरनारिबंद न कथा भावै सुपच तुलि समानि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (केदाय भगत रविदास, पृ० 1124)

If one does six prescribed deeds, but if in him there is no Devotion to the Lord, no Praising of the feet of the Lord or Reciting of His merciful actions, such a man is like a sweeper.

निवली करम भुअंगम भाठी रेचक पूरक कुंभ करै ॥

बिनु सतिगुर किछु सोझी नाही भरमे भूला बूडि मरै ॥

अंधा भरिआ भरि भरि धोवै अंतर की मलु कदे न लहै॥

नाम बिना फोकट सभि करमा जिउ बाजीगरु भरमि भुलै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 1, पृ० 1343)

One who engages in cleansing the intestines (Nauli Karma) and works like a furnace by practicing inhalation and retention of breath gets no knowledge without a Master and is drowned in ignorance. The blind one washes again and again, but the inner dirt is not removed. Without the Name, all actions are fruitless like the misleading tricks of magic man.

Amongst the Muslims, ablutions are compulsory before saying prayers. By this the outside of the body is cleaned. By keeping fasts, the inside of the body is cleaned. Both Christians and Buddhists pay great attention to cleanliness. Amongst the Sikhs, the Nirmalas and Namdharis (puritan sects of Sikhs) place great emphasis on frequent bathing. Of the three principal religious practices (Naam नाम, charity दान and bathing स्नान), bathing or cleanliness is one. It includes purity of the body, mind and intellect.

The elderly orthodox ladies consider bathing at sacred places to be cleanliness. One should put the sacred mark on the forehead, do worship, and not touch the clothes or other belongings of sweepers or others who belong to low castes. If one happens to touch them, one should bathe.

If one happens to take food from a person of low caste, he should also do penance. Then alone he becomes purified. It cannot, however, be denied that baths are necessary for cleanliness and good health.

But how can external cleanliness be of any help if the inner pot is dirty? One should speak the truth and have truthful conduct before he can be said to be pure. To be proud of being a Brahmin by birth is useless. He alone who knows the Lord (Brahm ब्रह्म) is really a Brahmin. He who knows the Truth (God) is truthful and pure. The key to knowing the Truth can only be obtained from a Master. Real purity cannot be had without serving a Master. Guru Arjan Dev says,

सरब निधान महि हरि नामु निधानु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 288)

Of all treasures, the Lord's Name is the Supreme Treasure.

Guru Nanak says,

नानक साचे कउ सचु जाणु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 15)

Nanak considers the True One alone to be True.

Truth can only be known through the Truth, which is with the Saints alone. He alone is rich, who gathers the true treasure of the Lord's Name.

सेई साह भगवंत से सचु संपै हरि रासि ॥

नानक सचु सुचि पाईऐ तिह संतन कै पासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी म० 5, पृ० 250)

Those who gather Truth and the riches of the Lord's Name are rich and very fortunate. O Nanak, truthfulness and purity are obtained from Saints such as these.

Guru Nanak says that only the bathing of those, who practice Truth, is fruitful.

काइआ कूड़ि विगाड़ि काहे नाईऐ ॥ नाता सो परवाणु सचु कमाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 1, पृ० 565)

Why bother to wash the body which is polluted by falsehood? One's cleansing bath is only approved, if one practices Truth.

Purification cannot be achieved by external bathing alone. It can only be had by bathing in the internal pool of nectar. This is possible only by searching within one's own body.

काइआ अंदरि अमृत सरु साचा मनु पीवै भाइ सुभाई हे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 3, पृ० 1046)

Deep within the body is the true pool of Ambrosial Nectar; the mind drinks it in with loving devotion.

By reaching the Pool of Nectar, the three covers of the soul (gross, subtle and ethereal) and the bondage of the gunas गुण (qualities), mind, Maya माया and the five elements पंच-तत्व are all removed and the soul becomes pure.

अंतरु निरमलु अमृत सिर नाए ॥ सदा सूचे साचि समाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 363)

By bathing in the inner Pool of Pure Nectar, the mind becomes cleansed and absorbed in Truth.

Man is full of the poisons of his defects. By washing the body, the inner poisons are not removed. It is recorded that Guru Amar Das, in his early years, led a clean and well regulated life as prescribed by the scriptures, and visited the Ganges every year with his companions.

After he had surrendered to Guru Angad Dev, his companions, when they were on their way to the Ganges, came to see him. In order to make them understand true purity, he gave them a bitter gourd तूबी, लौकी and asked them to dip it in the Ganges whenever they bathed. When they were returning from the pilgrimage, they met Guru Amar Das and gave the bowl back, telling him that they had bathed it in the Ganges as he had requested. Guru Sahib cut it into two, put water in it, and then gave the water to them for drinking. It tasted bitter. Guru Sahib asked them, why its bitterness had not gone, in spite of its having been bathed in sacred waters. Kabir Sahib asks,

न्हाये धोये क्या भया, जो मन का मैल न जाय।

मीन सदा जल में रहै, धोये बास न जाय॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (तीर्थ-व्रत का अंग 5, पृ० 176)

What is the good of cleaning the body, as long as the mind is full of poison? The fish remains in water, but does not lose its smell.

A gourd may be bathed in the sixty-eight sacred spots of the Hindus, but it still will not lose its bitterness.

कांइआ मांजसि कउन गुनां॥ जउ घट भीतरि है मलनां॥

लउकी अठसठि तीरथ न्हाई॥ कउरापनु तरु न जाई॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ भगत कबीर, पृ० 656)

What is the good of cleaning the mind if there is poison inside? The gourd was bathed in sixty-eight sacred spots, but its bitterness was not removed.

In the same way, merely cleaning the body does not result in removing the poison from the inner body. Guru Nanak says that by washing the body, one does not become pure. Only they are pure, in whose hearts the Lord dwells.

सूचे एहि न आखीअहि बहनि जि पिंडा धोइ॥

सूचे सेई नानका जिन मनि वसिआ सोइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 472)

They are not pure, who wash the outer body. O Nanak, only those are pure, in whose heart He dwells.

Guru Arjan says that one cannot become pure by bathing at sacred spots, while ego still reigns in the heart.

तीरथि नाइ कहा सुचि सैलु ॥ मन कउ विआपै हउमै मैलु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 5, पृ० 1149)

How can one become pure by bathing at a sacred spot, when the mind is full of the poison of egotism?

He further says that a man may go on cleaning himself day and night, but he will not remove the dirt of the mind by washing the body. He may take great pains to clean the body, but the poison of the mind is not removed. He may wash this impure body with water again and again, but how can the mind become pure?

सोच करै दिनसु अरु राति ॥ मन की मैलु न तन ते जाति ॥

इसु देही कउ बहु साधना करै ॥ मन ते कबहू न बिखिआ टरै ॥

जलि धोवै बहु देह अनीति ॥ सुध कहा होइ काची भीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 265)

He cleans the body day and night, but the dirt of the mind is not removed. By cleansing or washing the body in any way, the poison of the mind is not removed. He washes the body with water constantly; how then can the mind become pure?

Kabir Sahib says to the same effect, that one who is full of the poison of sense attachments, cannot obtain salvation by bathing at sacred spots. If bathing could lead to salvation, then the frog which bathes constantly would not be born again and again.

अंतरि मैलु जे तीरथ नावै तिसु बैकुंठ न जानां ॥

लोक पतीणे कछू न होवै नाही रामु अयाना ॥

पूजहु रामु एकु ही देवा ॥ साचा नावणु गुर की सेवा ॥

जल कै मजनि जे गित होवै नित नित मेंडुक नावहि ॥

जैसे मेंडुक तैसे ओइ नर फिरि फिरि जोनी आवहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा भगत कबीर, पृ० 484)

If one with inner uncleanness bathes in sacred spots, he does not go to heaven. Nothing comes from trying to please the worldly people, for the Lord is not unaware. Worship the one Lord God. Practice the true Name and serve the Master. If one were to

gain salvation by bathing, then the frog which bathes constantly would not be born again and again. (Kabir)

Guru Nanak Sahib says that when the heart is full of untruth and attachment, what is the good of bathing?

अंतरि मैलु लोभ बहु झूठे बाहरि नावहु काही जीउ ॥

निरमल नामु जपहु सद गुरुमुखि अंतर की गति ताही जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ मं 1, पृ० 598)

When the mind is full of the poison of avarice and falsehood, what is the use of bathing? When the devotee constantly repeats the pure Name, then only is the inner mind purified.

The dirty clothes of the body can be cleaned with water, but the dirt of sins can only be washed away with the dye of the Name.

भरीऐ हथु पैरु तनु देह ॥ पाणी धोतै उतरसु खेह ॥

मूत पलीती कपडु होइ ॥ दे साबूणु लईऐ ओहु धोइ ॥

भरीऐ मति पापा कै संगि ॥ ओहु धोपै नावै कै रंगि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी मं 1, पृ० 4)

When the hands, feet and the body are besmeared they are washed clean with water; when the clothes get dirty and polluted, they are cleansed by soap; when one's mind gets defiled by sin, it can be purified only by communion with the Word. (Jap Ji)

Gurus say that outer cleanliness or untouchability is false cleanliness. If the inside is impure, no good can be achieved by washing the outside. The uncleanness really pertains to the mind. By telling a lie the tongue and the body, both become impure and untruth flows out of the mouth.

How can that man then be pure? One who indulges in evil thinking, cruelty, backbiting, lust, anger, fear, attachment, pride or bad company becomes degraded. In order to gain real purity, one should avoid these things. It is of benefit to keep away from bad company. What is the use of remaining in such company and sitting with evil people?

मनि जूठै तनि जूठि है जिहवा जूठी होइ ॥

मुखि झूठै झूठु बोलणा किउ करि सूचा होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग मं 1, पृ० 55)

If the mind is impure, the body is also impure, and so is the tongue. He who is false of mouth, speaks untruth; how can he be pure?

कुबुधि डूमणी कुदइआ कसाइणि पर निंदा घट चूहड़ी मुठी क्रोधि चंडालि ॥
 कारी कढी किआ थीऐ जां चारे बैठीआ नालि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग की वार म० 1, पृ० 91)

Evil intentions are singing and dancing-women, heartlessness is a butcheress, backbiting is an untouchable. What is the use of drawing a circle around yourself, when all these are within you?

Until all these things stop entering our mind, the heart cannot become pure. It is only by getting such purity, that we are able to attain Truth. Guru Nanak Sahib says that one should contemplate on Truth, but it is only when one is pure that Truth can be had.

कहु नानक सचु धिआईऐ ॥ सुचि होवै ता सचु पाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 472)

O Nanak, Truth should be contemplated, but only the true can find the Truth.

By simply reading the scriptures or having discussions about them, one cannot become pure. True purity can only be obtained by love and devotion for the Lord.

कथनै कहणि न छुटीऐ ना पड़ि पुसतक भार ॥

काइआ सोच न पाईऐ बिनु हरि भगति पियार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 59)

One does not gain salvation by mere discussion or recital, or by reading many books. The body becomes pure, only when there is love and devotion for the Lord.

In reality, persons of low mentality are untouchables, rather than sweepers, cobblers, minstrels and bards. The real seeker should therefore give up rituals and undertake inner purification according to the directions of a Master and thus realize the Lord. He should drive out all thoughts except those of the Lord, so that the Lord may reveal Himself. Tulsi Sahib says that one should clean the cell of the heart, so that the Lord may enter it. He should exclude thoughts of all others from the heart so that the Lord may dwell in it.

दिल का हुजरा साफ़ कर जानां के आने के लिये ।

ध्यान गैरों का उठा उसके बिठाने के लिये ॥

-- तुलसी साहिब

Cleanse the inner chamber of the heart for the Beloved; banish all thoughts of others in order to make room for Him.

Gurus describe the clean body as one, in which the true Name of the Lord is dwelling. True cleanliness is achieved by the inner practice of the Shabd. That heart is pure, in which there is devotion for the deathless Lord and Master.

तनु सूचा सो आखीऐ जिसु महि साचा नाउ ॥

भै सचि राती देहुरी जिहवा सचु सुआउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 19)

That body is pure, where dwells the true Name; that one is true who fears the Lord; and that tongue is true which sings His praises.

Real cleanliness is achieved by good fortune by being absorbed in the Shabd, or by the Lord coming to dwell within.

सबदि मिले से सूचाचारी साची दरगह माने ॥

अनदिनु नामि रतनि लिव लागे जुगि जुगि साचि समाने ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 1, पृ० 1332)

When one unites with the Shabd, one becomes possessed of Right Conduct, and gets glory in the True Court; he becomes absorbed in the Jewel of the Name; this is true from age to age.

जे वड भाग होवहि वड ऊचे ॥ नानक नामु जपहि सचि सूचे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 367)

If one's destiny is great and exalted, O Nanak, one chants the Naam, the Name of the Immaculate, True Lord.

It is necessary to be clean both inside and outside. Have a clean body, speak good words. But unless pure thoughts arise inside, nothing pure can come out. It is, therefore, very necessary that the thoughts should be pure. Out of the fullness of his heart a man speaks. Therefore, be pure of heart and tongue. Outer cleanliness is the beginning of inner purity. Unless the body is clean the mind cannot be pure. If the heart is not clean, how can the soul be clean? The body can be kept clean by bathing and putting on clean clothes. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Do not utter any unkind or harmful words. Use words that sound sweet to all. Cleanliness of the heart consists in not entertaining any evil

thoughts. Unite yourself with the Name and thus get rid of all impure thoughts and attain cleanliness or purity of the soul.

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WORSHIP (*Pooja* पूजा)

The word Pooja (worship) comes from the Sanskrit root *puj* पूज, which means to serve or praise some higher and more sublime being than one's self in order to gain spiritual benefit. Nowadays, wherever one looks one finds only outer worship prevalent. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs and those belonging to other religions are all engaged in outer worship. Churches, gurudwaras (Sikh temples), mosques and mandirs मंदिर (Hindu temples) are all religious places. In the same way, all religious books deserve to be venerated. But people regard bowing their heads and offering flowers before them as worship. The Sikh Saints have written extensively on this type of worship. Guru Ramdas says that ignorant persons whose inner vision has not awakened are wallowing in ignorance. They worship lifeless idols and tombs by placing flowers on them. But all their efforts are of no real spiritual worth.

भरमि भूले अगिआनी अंधुले भ्रमि भ्रमि फूल तोरावै ॥

निरजीउ पूजहि मड़ा सरेवहि सभ बिरथी घाल गवावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 4, पृ० 1264)

Misled by superstitions, the ignorant blind ones make offerings of flowers to lifeless stones and graves, and waste their entire lives.

Kabir Sahib also does not approve of worshipping lifeless idols and does not believe that this leads to salvation. This likewise is the view of Guru Nanak.

बुत पूजि पूजि हिंदू मूए तुरक मूए सिरु नाई ॥

ओइ ले जारे ओइ ले गाडे तेरी गति दुहू न पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ भगत कबीर, पृ० 654)

The Hindus die while worshipping their idols; the Muslims die while bowing before Him; they burn, while they bury, the dead, neither of them know the Reality. (Kabir)

देवी देवा पूजहि डोलहि पारब्रह्म नही जाना ॥

कहत कबीर अकुलु नही चेतिआ बिखिआ सिउ लपटाना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी बैरागनि भगत कबीर, पृ० 332)

They who go and worship gods and goddesses do not know the Transcendental One; O Kabir, they see no truth and instead are taking poison. (Kabir)

पाथरु ले पूजहि मुग्ध गवार ॥ ओहि जा आपि डुबे तुम कहा तरणहार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विहागड़ा की वार म० 1, पृ० 556)

The deluded ignorant ones worship stones; that which will itself sink, how can it save you?

It is strange that he who lives in the natural mosque (the body), which was constructed by the Lord with His own hands, should undergo hardships in man-made mosques.

Tulsi Sahib says,

नकली मन्दिर मसजिदों में जाय सद अफसोस है ।

कुदरती मसजिद का साकिन दुख उठाने के लिए ॥

-- तुलसी साहिब, संत बानी संग्रह भाग-2 (पृ० 44)

It is regrettable that the owner of the Real Mosque should visit man-built mosques and temples.

Maulana Rumi says,

अबलहां तअजीमे-मस्जिद मी कुनंद, दर ज़फ़ाए अहले-दिल जिह्द मी कुनंद ।

आं मजाज़ अस्त ई हकीकत ऐ ख़रां, नीस्त मसजिद जुज़ दरुन-सरवारां ।

मस्जिदे कू अंदरुने-औलियास्त, सजदागाहे-जुमला अस्त आंजा खुदास्त ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 2, पृ० 293)

Fools pray in the mosques; the illuminated ones try to purify themselves; O fools, that is man-made, while this is God-made. There is no mosque except the one inside the Saints. The heart of the Saint is the mosque, all should worship the Lord there.

The ignorant people respect the mosque built of stones and bricks, but try to harm the Saints in whom the Lord is manifest. The worship in the mosque is all external observances. The Reality is that mosque which is inside the Saints. It is a true place of worship, because the Lord is manifest there. All the five elements are found in man, four in ani-

mals, three in birds and fish, two in insects, and one in vegetables. Man should not worship the lower beings. Many people worship stones or idols. What is idol worship? When did it start? What is real idol worship, and what is its purpose? These questions are discussed in a separate chapter on Idol-worship. People do not gain peace or realize the Lord by observing external rituals such as pilgrimages, cleanliness, self-control, burning incense, repetitions, austerities, putting marks on the forehead, bathing or reading scriptures. Guru Arjan Dev says that one is not dyed in the colour of the true Lord simply by doing the six actions (Shat Karma षट्कर्म), namely, practicing, cleanliness and self-control, bathing and so forth. Such a person never gains salvation.

खटु करमा ते दुगुणे पूजा करता नाइ ॥

रंगु न लगी पारब्रह्म ता सरपर नरके जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 70)

If he does the six actions and worships after bathing, but if he is not dyed with love for the Transcendental One, he goes to hell.

खटु सासत बिचरत मुखि गिआना ॥ पूजा तिलकु तीरथ इसनाना ॥

निवली करम आसन चउरासीह इन महि सांति न आवै जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 98)

People recite from memory the wisdom of the six schools of philosophy; by worship, putting marks on the forehead, visiting holy places or bathing at sacred spots, by washing the intestines or performing the eighty-four postures, one does not get peace of mind.

The real and beneficial worship is the inner worship, which is not performed by the hands and feet or by the mouth, but by the mind and heart.

अंतरि पूजा मन ते होइ ॥ एको देखै अउरु न कोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत म० 3, पृ० 1173)

The inner worship is done by the mind. Such a worshipper sees the One and none else.

पूजन चाली ब्रह्म ठाई ॥ सो ब्रह्मु बताइओ गुर मन ही माहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत हिंडोल भगत रामानन्द, पृ० 1195)

I went to the God's temple, and worshipped Him there. That God showed me the Guru, within my own mind.

चरन कमल निमख रिदै धारे ॥ गोबिंद जपत सभि कारज सारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 5, पृ० 1349)

If one cherishes the Lotus Feet even for a moment in his heart by remembering the Lord, all one's affairs are resolved.

That worship is fruitful, which leads to love for the Lord.

सो जपु सो तपु सा ब्रत पूजा जितु हरि सिउ प्रीति लगाइ ॥

बिनु हरि प्रीति होर प्रीति सभ झूठी इक खिन महि बिसरि सभ जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बैराडी म० 4, पृ० 720)

That repetition, those austerities, that fast and that worship is fruitful, which promotes love for the Lord. Except the love of the Lord, all other attachment is false and is forgotten in a moment.

The real worship is performed with inner love and by offering service of the body and the mind.

तीरथ वरत सुचि संजमु नाही करमु धरमु नही पूजा ॥

नानक भाइ भगति निसतारा दुबिधा विआपै दूजा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 75)

Visiting holy places, fasts, cleanliness, self-discipline, acts of piety matter not. O Nanak, it is only by devotion that one obtains deliverance; all else leads to duality.

माई गोबिंद पूजा कहा लै चरावउ ॥ अवरु न फूलु अनूपु न पावउ ॥

मैलागर बेहै है भुइअंगा ॥ बिखु अमृतु बसहि इक संगा ॥

धूप दीप नईबेदहि बासा ॥ कैसे पूज करहि तेरी दासा ॥

तनु मनु अरपउ पूज चरावउ ॥ गुर परसादि निरंजनु पावउ ॥

पूजा अरचा आहि न तोरी ॥ कहि रविदास कवन गति मोरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी भगत रविदास, पृ० 525)

O Mother, what should I offer to the Lord? I do not find any beautiful flower or any other thing that is worthy of Him; even with incense, lamps, offerings of food and fragrant flower. How is Thy servant to worship Thee? The snakes encircle the sandal-wood trees. Poison and nectar dwell there together. By offering the body and mind we attain the Lord, through the Grace of the Master. There is no other way of worship. O Ravidas, what will be your fate? (Ravidas)

When the worshipper progresses, he sees the Lord in His full glory. He sees that flowers and other beautiful things are already there, and there is no need to offer them. Even

the body, the mind and our wealth are no longer ours. Then how can we offer anything?

एको रवि रहिआ सम ठाई ॥ अवरु न दीसै किसु पूज चड़ाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 1, पृ० 1345)

The One sun is pervading everywhere. I do not see any other; unto whom should I offer worship?

Guru Arjan says that only the Lord should be worshipped. Those who worship others are killing their soul.

राज ते कीट कीट ते सुरपति करि दोख जठर कउ भरते ॥

कृपा निधि छोडि आन कउ पूजहि आतम घाती हरते ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मत्तार म० 5, पृ० 1267)

From king to insects, and from insects to the king of the gods, all fill their bellies by causing pain to others. They leave the Lord and worship others, and thus destroy their souls.

The Lord is the basic substance or essence of all forms and of the formless. How can we worship Him? The Lord as the Shabd or Name pervades the whole of the universe. Name and Shabd are the Lord, and worship of them is worship of Him. The Saints teach that real worship consists in remembrance and repetition of the Name of the Lord. This is acceptable to the Lord. Most of the people do not do this and are following a wrong path.

पूजा कीचै नामु धिआईऐ बिनु नावै पूज न होइ ॥

- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी म० 1, पृ० 489)

In order to worship, contemplate on the Name; for without the Name, there is no worship.

पवित पावन से जन साचे एक सबदि लिव लाई ॥

बिनु नावै होर पूज न होवी भरमि भुली लोकाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 910)

Sanctified and pure are those true beings, who enshrine love for the Shabd. There is no worship of the Lord, other than Naam; without it, the world wanders, deluded by doubt.

The Name should be worshipped in all hearts. Man is tied with the rope of attachment and Maya. This can be cut only by a Master, and He alone can make man worship the Name.

काटि जेवरी कीओ दासरो संतन टहलाइओ ॥

एक नाम को थीओ पूजारी मो कउ अचरजु गुरहि दिखाइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 209)

He cut the rope and made me His slave. He made me serve the Saints. I became a worshipper of the one Name. The Master showed me beautiful visions.

But only a sincere devotee can worship the Name.

पूजा करहि परु बिधि नही जाणहि दूजै भाइ मलु लाई ॥

गुरमुखि होवै सु पूजा जाणै भाणा मनि वसाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 910)

One worships, but knows not the way. Secondly, his mind is stained. Only a Gurumukh knows the true worship, and the Will (of the Master) dwells in his mind.

पूजा करै सभु लोकु संतहु मनमुखि थाइ न पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 910)

Everyone worships Him, O Saints, but the worship of self-willed manmukh is neither accepted nor approved.

This real knowledge and contemplation or the wealth of the worship of the Name can be obtained only from a Master.

गुण पूजा गिआन धिआन नानक सगल घाल ॥

जिसु करि किरपा सतिगुरु मिलै दइआल ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 187)

Virtue, worship, spiritual wisdom, meditation and all service, O Nanak, are obtained from the True Guru, when, in His mercy and kindness, He gives his acquaintance.

पीपा प्रणवै परम ततु है सितगुरु होइ लखावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत पीपा, पृ० 695)

Peepa says, the Lord is the Supreme Essence, He reveals Himself through the True Guru. (Peepa)

समुंदु विरोलि सरीरु हम देखिआ इक वसतु अनूप दिखाई ॥

गुर गोविंदु गोविंदु गुरु है नानक भेदु न भाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 442)

I searched the ocean of the body, and discovered a wonderful thing – O Nanak, the Master is the Lord, and the Lord is the Master, and there is no difference between the two.

Until a man rises to higher and finer regions, where he can himself worship the Lord, it befits him to worship His

incarnation, the Master. The essence of the Master is Naam or Shabd. A disciple should, therefore, while contemplating on the human form of the Master, with his outer eyes, progress inwardly and see the illuminated form of the Master within. When the heart of the devotee meets the heart of the Master, then the melody of the Shabd will be heard. Devotion to the Master is a step leading to spiritual relationship. Worship of the Master is worship of the Lord. Gurus place great emphasis upon this. One should worship both the Lord and the Master to gain salvation.

गुरु परमेश्वर पूज्ये मनि तनि लाइ पिआरु ॥

सतिगुरु दाता जीअ का सभसै देइ अधारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 5, पृ० 52)

Worship the Lord and the Master with love in your mind and heart; the Master is the giver of bliss and is the mainstay of all.

खत्री ब्राह्मण सूदु वैसु को जापै हरि मंत्रु जपैनी ॥

गुरु सतिगुरु पारब्रह्म करि पूजहु नित सेवहु दिनसु सभ रैनी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 800)

The Name of the Lord can be repeated by all, whether Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Shudras or Vaishyas. The devotee worships the Master as the Transcendent Lord, and remembers Him always day and night.

Guru Ram Das goes to the extent of saying that he who worships the Guru, is dear to the Lord.

जो गुरु कउ जनु पूजे सेवे सो जनु मेरे हरि प्रभ भावै ॥

हरि की सेवा सतिगुरु पूजहु करि किरपा आपि तरावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 4, पृ० 1264)

He who worships and serves the Master is dear to my Lord; the Master is the servant of the Lord. He by His Grace takes one across (the Ocean of the World).

In the Gita, Sri Krishna as the Master tells his disciple Arjuna:

क्लेशो ऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥

-- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (12:5-8)

People have great difficulty in contemplating on the unmanifest, and this can be done only with great difficulty. Therefore, you (O Arjun) think of me (the form of the Guru). Still the mind and by this, you will certainly dwell in me.

The worship of the Lord consists of the worship of the Master. The Master teaches the method of worshipping the Name. One day the disciple will see the Lord in all the universe, and the Lord will manifest within him.

नानक का पातिसाहु दिसै जाहरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 397)

The Supreme King of Nanak is immanent and manifest.

Such a rare form of worship can only be had, when the Lord Himself wishes it. Man can then reach the Master, who shares the worship of the Name with him. It is only due to great good fortune, that worship of the holy feet of the Master can be had.

वडै भागि पूज गुर चरना ॥ सगल तिआगि पाई प्रभ सरना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 395)

It is owing to great good fortune that one gets to worship the feet of the Master; he gives up all and takes shelter with the Lord.

Maulana Rumi says,

नमाज़े-जाहिदां सजदा सुजूद अस्त, नमाज़े-आशिकां तर्के-वुजूद अस्त ।

पंज वक्त आमद नमाज़ ऐ रीनमून, आशिकां रा फी सलातिन दायमून ॥

-- मसजवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 6, पृ० 260)

The worship of the devout consists of kneeling and prostrating themselves. The lovers of the Lord give up their bodily consciousness. Five times a day the thought to worship occurs to the devout. But the lovers always remain in communion with the Lord.

The devotees who perform outer worship say prayers, but the lovers of the Lord leave the body and then say prayers by going inside. The devotees say prayers five times a day at fixed hours, but the lovers listen to the Inner Voice every moment.

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AWE & AFFECTION

(Bhaya भय & Bhava भाव)

Bhaya भय– Awe

The word 'Bhaya' in Sanskrit means to be 'in fear of' or 'in awe of'. The Gurus have used this word at several places. Everyone, whether a human being or not, has some fear. No one is entirely free from it. It is only the Lord who is not afraid of anyone, as He is the creator of all. He has no co-sharer or companion.

एके कउ नाही भउ कोइ ॥ करता करे करावै सोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 1, पृ० 796)

One who belongs to the One Lord, has no fear. The Creator acts, and causes all to act.

If one wishes to become fearless, one should worship the Lord. As one thinks, so he becomes. The worship of the fearless One makes you fearless also. The Lord is immanent or dwelling within you.

दूजा नाही अउरु को ता का भउ करीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 399)

There is no other, of whom we should stand in awe.

बिनु हरि भउ काहे का मानहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी गुआरेरी म० 5, पृ० 184)

There is no need to be afraid of anybody, other than the Lord. Except the Lord, there is none other to be afraid of.

Of whom can one stand in awe? Only of one about the existence of whom he is certain. There can be no fear of one, whose existence is doubted. Therefore, whenever there is fear of the Lord, there is an ever present belief in His existence. When there is fear, the heart and mind are affected. The Lord pervades both land and sea.

जलि थलि महीअलि भरिपुरि लीणा घटि घटि जोति तुम्हारी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 1, पृ० 795)

You pervade the land and the sea, Your Light shines in every heart.

When man is afraid of the Lord, he constantly remembers Him and he cannot commit any sin. Awe and affection are thus born. It is for remembering the Lord, that all worship is performed. If, while performing actions, there is no remembrance or awe of the Lord, then these actions and duties lead nowhere.

बिनु भै करम कमावणे झूठे ठाउ न कोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 427)

The performance of rituals without fear is false; no one finds a place of rest thereby.

Gurus place great emphasis on awe for spiritual development. When there is awe, there is a strong desire to find means to remove it. It serves as a reminder every moment that one should strive to achieve one's object. For this reason, one makes quick progress.

लेखै तेरै सास गिरास ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 354)

The number of breaths in the life of each one is fixed. Your breaths and morsels of food are already counted.

Man's days are numbered. It is not known when they will end. Every day, every hour, every minute brings us nearer to that great final change (which is called death). On its arrival, the soul leaves the gross, astral and the ethereal bodies and goes to higher regions. This body is the field of actions. One can do actions in this body alone. In this body, man can know himself and become indistinguishable from the Lord. The fear that the goal may not be realized before the end of this life, and that this human birth would therefore be in vain, compels a man to become spiritual. Not to know one's own self and to spend day and night in sin is to commit suicide. He who is afraid of not knowing his own self and of passing his days in sin and thus committing suicide and not knowing the Lord, stands in awe of Him

and takes steps to free himself from his fear, and to know the Lord through himself. In this way, he escapes the fear of death. Those who are not in awe of the Lord, always live in fear of death and rebirth.

जिना भउ तिन्ह नाहि भउ मुचु भउ निभविआह ॥

नानक एहु पटंतरा तितु दीबाणि गइआह ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 2, पृ० 788)

Those who are in awe of the Lord, have no fear; those without it, have much to fear. O Nanak, this mystery is only solved when one enters the Court of the Lord.

भै बिनु कोइ न लंघसि पारि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी गुआरेरी म० 1, पृ० 151)

Without fear, no one can cross the Ocean of the World.

How is this Awe Born?

The one on whom the Lord showers His Grace, lives in awe of Him, day and night.

अपनी किरपा करे सोई जनु पाए ॥ गुर का सबदु मंनि वसाए ॥

अनदिनु सदा रहै भै अंदरि भै मारि भरमु चुकावणिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 3, पृ० 113)

He to whom He is merciful, gets it by making the Shabd of the Master dwell in his mind; he always remains in awe of Him. He destroys all other fears, and his doubts are removed.

Maya, the deceptive illusion of the world, is very powerful. In reality, the universe changes every moment, and nothing in it is eternal or remains in the same state, although it appears to us to be eternal and everlasting. The intellect may for a moment believe it to be illusory, but the heart does not admit it to be so. When a Master is found and one takes on His colour, then the curtain of Maya becomes a little loosened and he begins to see the illusory nature of the world. He begins to understand the causes of the fall of the soul, of the troubles in this world, and begins to take steps to remove them from his own life. He begins to believe that the Lord is all powerful. He begins to love Him. He then sees His Will working.

जिसु सितगुरु मिलै तिसु भउ पवै सा कुलवंती नारि ।।
सा हुकमु पछाणै कंत का जिस नो कृपा कीती करतारि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी की वार म० ३, पृ० ५१६)

She, who meets the Master stands in awe of Him and is a woman of noble birth; she knows the Will of the Lord through His Mercy.

We do not see the Lord, then why should we be in awe of Him? He is manifest in the Master. On meeting a Master, awe for the Lord comes to us of itself. The Master knows everything in our heart. When we see the Master, we know Him. He knows us inside out, and we become afraid of our own actions. We try to rid ourselves of them, and easily become pure. On one side is our awe of Him; on the other is His remembrance and upward pull. Awe forms in the mind and is mingled with affection, and this gives us an opportunity for self-improvement.

सतिगुरि मिलिए भउ ऊपजै भै भाइ रंगु सवारि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० ३, पृ० ७८८)

When one meets a Master, fear develops in him, and he is embellished with love and fear of God.

On account of the Awe (fear) of the Master, many people have attained the Fearless (God) and gained spiritual emancipation.

सेखा अंदरहु जोरु छडि तू भउ करि झलु गवाइ ।।
गुर कै भै केते निसतरे भै विचि निरभउ पाइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़े की वार म० ३, पृ० ५५१)

O Sheikh, still thy ego and abiding in the fear (of the Lord) shed thy craziness. Yea, thru the Guru's fear, many have attained salvation and living in fear, have attained the Fearless (God).

The fear of the Lord can take root within us by the Grace of the Master, and when it gets settled down there, the mind gives up its improper tendencies and comes under control.

गुर परसादी भउ पड़आ वडभागि वसिआ मनि आइ ।।

भै पड़ऐ मनु वसि होआ हउमै सबदि जलाइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ की वार म० ३, पृ० ६४५)

It is by Guru's Grace that one is filled with the Lord's Fear, and by good fortune, God abides in one's mind. Through God's Fear, one controls the mind, and through the Word, one's sense of ego is destroyed.

God is Shabd (Word) and the Master is its embodiment. He reveals to us the secret of the practice of Shabd. Satsang and the practice of the Shabd firmly establish awe of the Lord in our being.

आपणा भउ तिन पाइओनु जिन गुर का सबदु बीचारि॥

सतसंगती सदा मिलि रहे सचे के गुण सारि॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 3, पृ० 35)

They alone are filled with the Fear of the Lord, who practice Guru's Word (Shabd). They always live in the company of the Saints, and to them are revealed the merits of the True One.

Innumerable benefits flowing from awe of the Lord are detailed in Gurbani (scriptures). None can cross the ocean of fear (world) without awe. Lord's devotion and peace of mind are born of awe. It also helps the manifestation of Shabd within. When we remain in fear all the time, there is constant remembrance of the Lord within and this purifies us. Ego leaves us, the fear of death disappears and we are freed from ignorance. It leads to attainment of salvation and our original home – Sach Khand. Gurbani also refers to the many evils that result from the absence of the fear of the Lord. Persons devoid of such fear ever remain in darkness, lead purposeless life and suffer untold misery at the time of their death. They do not deserve to be associated with. In their company, we get no inspiration for the devotion of the Lord and the mind remains unclean.

How to be Free from Fear?

The Lord is the true Father and Mother of us all. He is the real Friend and Brother. He is ever our protector. The fear of transmigration and the chain of birth and death are shattered as a result of taking refuge in Him. By His Grace all our cherished desires are fulfilled and all our fears are driven out.

तू मेरा पिता तूहै मेरा माता॥ तू मेरा बंधपु तू मेरा भ्राता॥

तू मेरा राखा सभनी थाई ता भउ केहा काड़ा जीउ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 103)

Thou art my father; Thou art my mother; Thou art my kin; Thou art my brother. When Thou art my protector everywhere, why then may I be in fear, O dear?

निरभउ भए सगल भउ मिटिआ राखे राखनहारे ।।
ऐसी दाति तेरी प्रभ मेरे कारज सगल सवारे ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 383)

And I became fearless, all my fears vanished, and the Protector, protected me, yea. Such is Thy munificence, O Lord, that You have resolved all my affairs.

After meeting the true Master, man begins to practice Naam and feels the presence of God everywhere. All ignorance and fear are removed.

सचि मैलु न लागै भ्रमु भउ भागै ।। बिलमु न तूटसि काचै तागै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 1, पृ० 840)

Know ye that Truth is soiled not and through it, one is rid of fear and doubt, and it taketh one no time to break the thread of illusion.

भै भउ भरमु खोइआ गुरि पूरै देखा सभनी जाई जीउ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 107)

The Perfect Master has dispelled all fear, and all doubts from one's mind, and one sees the Lord everywhere.

After the Naam becomes his mainstay and the Shabd is manifested within, all fears leave him.

भउ बिनसै अंमृतु रसै रंगि रते निरंकार ।।

दुख दारिद अपवित्रता नासहि नाम अधार ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (थिती गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 297)

Fear leaves him, he tastes the Nectar and is dyed in the hue of the formless One. Pain, poverty and impurity are removed, with the Support of Naam, the Name of the Lord.

जिन अंदरि नामु निधानु है तिन का भउ सभु गवाइसी ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 4, पृ० 310)

Those who have the treasure of the Name inside them are free from fear.

दिनु रैणि घड़ी न चसा विसरै सासि सासि निरंजनो ।।

सबदि जोति जगाइ दीपकु नानका भउ भंजनो ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल दखनी म० 1, पृ० 843)

They, who do not forget the immaculate Lord day or night, even for a moment, they hear the Shabd and see the Flame of the Light within. O Nanak, all their fears are dispelled.

Egotism is destroyed. One enjoys spiritual experiences and no fear remains. The devotees accept whatever happens with gratefulness.

जह अनभउ तह भै नही जह भउ तह हरि नाहि ॥

कहिए कबीर बिचारि कै संत सुनहु मन माहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1374)

If there is fear, it means that one has not realized the Lord. When there is realization, there is no fear; where fear lives, the Lord is not. O Saints, remember this, for Kabir has said it after great deliberation.

Bhava भाव – Affection

The Sanskrit word 'Bhava' (Punjabi word, Bhau) means confidence, faith, love, affection, respect or desire. It means love, which is mingled with respect and is full of reverence. In ordinary love, the quality of respect for the beloved is sometimes overlooked; but Gurus emphasize only that love, which is full of affection and respect and which recognizes the sublimity of the Beloved. Such devotion is true. Guru Nanak says that without such affection, eating and drinking is useless and life is unfruitful. All repetitions, austerities, fasts, self-discipline and baths in sacred waters are of no use if they are performed without affection and devotion to the Lord.

जनमे का फलु किआ गणी जां हरि भगति न भाउ ॥

पैधा खाधा बादि है जां मनि दूजा भाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 1, पृ० 1411)

What is the use of human birth, if there is no devotion or love for the Lord? Eating and wearing fine clothing is useless, if the mind is filled with the love of duality.

किआ जपु किआ तपु संजमो किआ बरतु किआ इसनानु ॥

जब लगु जुगति न जानीऐ भाउ भगति भगवान ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी भगत कबीर, पृ० 337)

What is the use of repetitions, austerities, self-discipline or fasts, if one does not know how to have love and devotion for the Lord. (Kabir)

In order to experience God in action it is necessary to possess such affection.

इहु सरीरु करम की धरती गुरमुखि मथि मथि ततु कढईआ ॥

लालु जवेहर नामु प्रगासिआ भांडै भाउ पवै तितु अईआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 834)

This body is the field of karma (action), and the Gurumukh churns it to find the Essence. The diamond of Naam shines within it, and Reality is in the vessel of love.

Such affection is an aspect of the Lord Himself, and it is experienced when it pleases Him. All ignorance and illusion then leave the devotee, and he sees the Lord face to face. Such devotional affection can come only from the Lord Himself.

आपे भगती भाउ तूं आपे मिलहि मिलाइ ॥

नानक नामु न वीसरै जिउ भावै तिवै रजाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 62)

You are Yourself devotion and love; You unite us to Yourself. O Nanak, may I never forget Naam! As is Your Pleasure, so is Your Will.

जां तिसु भावै ता लागै भाउ ॥ भरमु भुलावा विचहु जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग भगत कबीर, पृ० 92)

As it pleases Him, people embrace love for the Lord; their doubts and delusions are dispelled from within. (Kabir)

तुम ते उपजिओ भगती भाउ ॥ जपु जापउ गुरमुखि हरि नाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 906)

Devotion and love spring from You; it is You who make the Gurumukhs remember the Name of the Lord.

When we are in this gross body, we become one with it. We cannot see the Lord, who is extremely subtle and unknowable. How can there be affection for someone whom we have not seen? He shows a glimpse of Himself in the person of Saints and holy men.

हमरो भरता बडो बिबेकी आपे संतु कहावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा भगत कबीर, पृ० 476)

My consort is very wise, and He alone is called a Saint. (Kabir)

साध रूप अपना तनु धारिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1005)

He appears in the form of the Saints.

When one finds a Master, and is accepted by Him, and when the Master is pleased with him, he receives looks of affection.

भाउ भोजनु सतिगुरि तुठै पाए ॥ अन रसु चूकै हरि रसु मंनि वसाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 3, पृ० 115)

The food of spiritual love is obtained, when the True Guru is pleased. When the Lord's Essence comes to dwell in the mind, other essences are all forgotten.

It is the real food of affection, which is revealed by the Master, and by taking it, the Truth appears.

नानक साचे कउ सचु जाणु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराम म० 1, पृ० 15)

O Nanak, know the True Lord as True.

This devotional affection cannot be revealed, except by a true Master.

सचा भोजनु भाउ सतिगुरि दसिआ ॥ सचे ही पतीआइ सचि विगसिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 2, पृ० 146)

The Master revealed the true Food of Love; by loving the Lord, Truth is realized.

Sometimes a devotee becomes intoxicated with love and begins to dance with joy. This is not affection. Affection is mingled with awe, and this awe can only be generated by affection for the Master. Those only who stand in awe, can have true affection.

नचणु कुदणु मन का चाउ ॥ नानक जिन्ह मनि भउ तिन्हा मनि भाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 465)

Dancing and gesturing are the play of the mind; O Nanak! those whose minds are filled with the fear of God, have the love of God in their minds as well.

It is said that Majnun used to bow to each footprint made by Laila, his Beloved.

O seeker, your Beloved pervades every particle of the land and the skies. You should take each step with respect and bow to the Beloved. You should walk with the feet of awe and with eyes of affection and keep your attention fixed on the Beloved, so that you may merge in Him.

भै के चरण कर भाव के लोइण सुरति करेइ ॥

नानकू कहै सिआणीए इव कंत मिलावा होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 2, पृ० 139)

Let the Fear of God be your feet, and let His Love be your hands; let His Understanding be your eyes. Says Nanak, in this manner, O wise soul-bride, you shall be united with your Husband Lord.

Hafiz Sahib also hints at this. He says,

ता ज़ि मैखाना-ओ-मै नामो-निशां ख्वाहद बूद,
सरे-मा ख़ाके-रहे-पीरे-मुगां ख्वाहद बूद ।
बर ज़मीने किह् निशाने-कफ़े-पाए-तू बूद,
सालहा सजदा-ए-साहिब नज़रां ख्वाहद बूद ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 132)

As long as traces of Your Name and company remain with me, my head will remain bowed on Your path. O Master, the places which have Your footprints, become the places of worship for the illuminated ones.

Awe is inspired only by meeting a true Master. This awe, created by the Master's extraordinary beauty and magnetism, gives rise to pangs of love. One feels a peculiar sensation of love and abandon. When the devotee is in front of the Master, both his heart and soul are attracted to Him.

In that state, under the influence of awe, the eyes get filled with tears, but the devotee cannot go beyond the limit of propriety. He cannot remain quiet, and yet he cannot speak. He becomes tongue-tied. This state defies description. A lover may be in the room of the Beloved, but he cannot utter a syllable.

सतिगुरि मिलिए भउ ऊपजै भै भाइ रंगु सवारि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 3, पृ० 788)

Meeting with the True Guru, the Fear of God wells up, and one is embellished with the Fear and the Love of God.

One can only attain such a condition of affection by standing in awe of the Master.

भै बिचि भाउ भाइ कोऊ बूझहि हरि रसु पावै भाई ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (केदार भगत कबीर, पृ० 1123)

In the fear of God, is the Love of God. Only those few who understand his love obtain the sublime essence of the Lord, O Siblings of Destiny. (Kabir)

When a devotee attains this state of affection, the fear of death and rebirth is dispelled and because of him all of his family gains salvation. Fear and ignorance are destroyed and one becomes fearless. The devotee enjoys a real holy bath

and gains everlasting life. By having affection for the Master he realizes the Name as a reality. The entire world rises higher because of his affection.

Awe and Affection

What are called Bhaya and Bhava in Sanskrit confer great benefits. By having them as an embellishment, one is able to return to one's Original Home. The Gurus direct that these should be acquired.

भउ भाउ दुइ पत लाइ जोगी इहु सरीरु करि डंडी ॥

गुरुमुखि होवहि ता तंती वाजै इन बिधि त्रिसना खंडी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (यमकली म० 3, पृ० 908)

O Yogi, Awe and Love are like two spheres attached to the staff of the body; if you are beloved of the Master, the Music is struck and in this way the cravings are all destroyed.

The soul that has awe and affection as its embellishments always enjoys the happiness of her Lord. How are these embellishments acquired? The soul uses the collyrium of awe and puts it in the eyes of affection, shows love for her Lover and becomes the ever happy wife of her Lord.

कहतु नानकु भै भाव का करे सीगारु ॥ सद ही सेजै रवै भतारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 357)

O Nanak, she who embellishes herself with awe and affection, adorns the bed of her Lord at all times.

भै कीआ देहि सलाईआ नैणी भाव का करि सीगारो ॥

ता सोहागणि जाणीऐ लागी जा सहु धरे पिआरो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तिलंग म० 1, पृ० 722)

With the collyrium of awe, she adorns the eyes of love; she is indeed the ever happy soul-bride, who loves her husband.

When the soul, decorating herself with awe, tastes the juice of the betel leaves of affection and surrenders body and mind to her Lord, it becomes indistinguishable from Him.

भउ सीगारु तबोल रसु भोजनु भाउ करेइ ॥

तनु मनु सउपे कंत कउ तउ नानक भोगु करेइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 3, पृ० 788)

When the soul, decorated with Awe, tastes the juice of the betel leaves of affection and surrenders body and mind to the Lord, she is ever in happiness, O Nanak.

Kabir Sahib says that if one has only a little of this affectionate devotion, it is then no wonder that he meets the Lord. Just as water blends with water and cannot be separated, similarly, the soul that is embellished with awe and affection is drawn by the magnet of the Lord and merges in Him.

जो जनु भाउ भगति कछु जानै ता कउ अचरजु काहो ॥

जिउ जलु जल महि पैसि न निकसै तिउ दुरि मिलिओ जुलाहो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत कबीर, पृ० 692)

That humble being, who is conversant with the practice of Love and Devotion, what surprises are there for him? It is no wonder that just as water mingles with water and does not separate, so did the weaver (Kabir) unite with the Lord.

It is truly said that the drop, by blending with the ocean, becomes the ocean.

What a beautiful picture has been drawn of awe and affection in the Jap Ji! Guru Nanak uses the illustration of a goldsmith's shop. He says that in the shop of purity of body and mind, the devotee should patiently beat the anvil of wisdom with the hammer of knowledge. He should kindle the fire of the practice of austerities with the bellows of awe. He should then make nectar in the crucible of affection, distilling it by constant remembrance of the reality of the Lord. That is the real factory, in which the Shabd is generated.

जतु पाहारा धीरजु सुनिआरु ॥ अहरणि मति वेदु हथीआरु ॥

भउ खला अगनि तप ताउ ॥ भांडा भाउ अंमृतु तितु ढालि ॥

घड़ीऐ सबदु सची टकसाल ॥ जिन कउ नदरि करमु तिन कार ॥

नानक नदरी नदरि निहाल ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 8)

Let self-control be the furnace, and patience the goldsmith. Let the understanding be the anvil, and spiritual wisdom the tools. With the fear of God as the bellows, fan the flames of tapas, the body's inner heat. In the crucible of love, melt the Nectar of the Name, and mint the True Coin of Shabd, the Word of God. Such is the karma of those upon whom He has cast His Glance of

Grace. O Nanak, the Merciful Lord, by His Grace, uplifts and exalts them.

Guru Nanak further illustrates the necessity of love by another metaphor. When the time of ultimate union arrives, the tiller should cultivate the land with the plough of humility using contentment as the bullocks. In other words, he should engage in practice and irrigate the ground of love with the water of purity. The crop of spirituality will then sprout.

भउ भुइ पवितु पाणी सतु संतोखु बलेद ॥

हलु हलेमी हाली चितु चेता वत्र वखत संजोगु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 955)

Let love be the ground, purity the water, truth and contentment the bullocks, humility the plough, mind the tiller, remembrance of the Lord the soil, and the harvest, union with the Lord.

Awe and love are mentioned together, as well as separately by the Gurus. One always thinks of and remembers the one he loves. When one loves a beautiful and Divine Being, the remembrance of this Being always attracts him and remains present in his inner mind. Such love, which is tinged with awe, becomes true affection. When there is such love, affection grows.

नानक जिन्ह मनि भउ तिन्हा मनि भाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 465)

O Nanak, those whose minds are filled with the Fear of God, have love of God in their minds as well.

भै बिनु भगति न होवई नामि न लगै पिआरु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 3, पृ० 788)

Without Awe there can be no Devotion, and there can be no Love for the Name.

बिनु भै किनै न प्रेमु पाइआ बिनु भै पारि न उतरिआ कोई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तुखारी म० 4, पृ० 1116)

Without the fear of God, His Love is not obtained. Without the Fear of God, no one is carried across.

Both awe and love go together. Just as the sky is above the earth and day follows night, similarly, owing to one's awe of the Master, fear which is filled with reverence and

affection is born. The Master is an incarnation of the Lord; therefore awe and affection for Him, are awe and affection for the Lord. We should strengthen our devotion through these qualities.

धरति अकासु कीए बैसण कउ थाउ ॥ राति दिनंतु कीए भउ भाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 1, पृ० 839)

He turned earth and sky into his dwelling place. He created day and night, fear and love.

प्रेम प्रीति सदा धिआईऐ भै भाइ भगति द्विड़ावणिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 3, पृ० 112)

With love and affection, meditate forever on the Master. He implants the Fear of God and Loving Devotional worship within us.

There should be awe and affection for no one else. The store of the Lord's devotion is limitless and inexhaustible, and it is through His Grace alone, that one can have awe and affection. Only that person, to whom the Lord is kind, can be dyed in this colour.

भउ भाउ प्रीति नानक तिसहि लागै जिसु तू आपणी किरपा करहि ॥

तेरी भगति भंडार असंख जिसु तू देवहि मेरे सुआमी तिसु मिलहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तुखारी म० 4, पृ० 1116)

O Nanak, he alone is blessed with the Fear of God, and God's Love and Affection, whom You, Lord, bless with Your Mercy. The treasures of Devotional Worship to You are countless; he alone is blessed with them, O my Lord and Master, whom You bless.

आपे रंगे सहजि सुभाए ॥ गुर कै सबदि हरि रंगु चड़ाए ॥

मनु तनु रता रसना रंगि चलूली भै भाइ रंगु चड़ावणिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 3, पृ० 114)

He Himself dyes the devotee in His own colour. Through the Shabd of the Master, one is dyed in the colour of the Lord. The mind and body are so imbued, and this tongue is dyed in deep crimson colour of poppy. Through the Love and Fear of God, we are dyed in this colour.

But he who has perverse vision cannot have awe and affection.

दिसटि विकारी नाही भउ भाउ ॥ आपु मारे ता पाइए नाउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 1, पृ० 153)

If vision is perverse, there is no awe and love. Conquering self-conceit, one obtains the Name.

All the desires of the mind are fulfilled through awe and affection. Man is dyed in a beautiful colour, and the false colour of the world cannot affect him. The melody of the Shabd or Naam is heard, and he attains salvation. Without awe and affection, death and rebirth continue.

Affection for Others

When one has affection for beings other than the Lord, that is, for worldly objects, and so forth, it is called dwaita द्वैत (duality) in Sanskrit.

There is mention of this in Gurbani. It is said that in the material universe, constant change and evil tendencies are to be found everywhere, and the people are restless because of their bondage to those tendencies, but they do not realize it.

त्रै गुण सभा धातु है दूजा भाउ विकारु ॥

पंडितु पड़ै बंधन मोह बाधा नह बूझै बिखिआ पिआरि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 3, पृ० 33)

All are engaged in the activities of the world and love of duality; Pandits are in bondage to attachment and do not know the nature of illusion. These are the obstructions due to their love of Maya.

In the field of the world, the feeling of otherness is strong. Three forces (Brahma ब्रह्मा, the creator, Vishnu विष्णु, the preserver, and Shankar शंकर, the destroyer) are working within the law of the Lord. Everyone is entangled in their net of worldly attachments and is afraid of them. No one turns away from them and looks to his real Creator and Sustainer, the Lord.

दूजा भाउ रचाइओनु त्रै गुण वरतारा ॥

ब्रह्मा बिसनु महेशु उपाइअनु हुकमि कमावनि कारा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 3, पृ० 948)

God created the love of duality, and the three Gunas – modes which pervade the universe. He created Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, who act according to His Will.

Until one reaches the fourth stage, which is beyond the sphere of the three gunas, and this can be attained only by meeting the Master, the daily routine of his life, together with worship, fasts and self-discipline keeps him in the sphere of otherness.

वरतु नेमु निताप्रति पूजा ॥ बिनु बूझे सभु भाउ है दूजा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 3, पृ० 841)

Fasts, rules of conduct and daily worship lead to the love of otherness, and do not bring real insight.

सतगुरि मिलिए त्रकुटी छूटै चउथै पदि मुकति दुआरु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग की वार म० 3, पृ० 33)

Meeting the Guru, the bondage of the three Gunas – qualities, is cut away, and in the fourth state, the Door of Liberation is attained.

People forget the Creator and become entangled in His creation, and forget death.

दाति पिआरी विसरिआ दातारा ॥ जाणै नाही मरणु विचारा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 676)

One loves the creation and not the Creator; one does not ever think of death.

Owing to the feeling of otherness, no love is developed, and one forgets the feet of the Lord and never even thinks of them. Owing to ignorance, one gets involved in the cycle of death and birth.

दूजा भाउ न देई लिव लागण जिनि हरि के चरण विसारे ॥

जगजीवन दाता जन सेवक तेरे तिन के तै दूख निवारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 3, पृ० 796)

The love of otherness makes one forget the holy feet of the Lord. O Life Sustainer of the Universe! remove the sufferings of Thy servant.

मुंघ इआणी मनमुखी फिरि आवण जाणा अंडु ॥

हरि प्रभु चिति न आइओ मनि दूजा भाउ सहलंडु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 732)

The self-willed manmukh is like the ignorant bride, who comes and goes again and again in reincarnation. The Lord God does not come into her consciousness, and her mind is stuck in the love of duality.

As long as the feeling of otherness is present in the heart, repetitions, austerities, fasts and worship are of no help.

किआ जपु किआ तपु किआ ब्रत पूजा॥ जा कै रिदै भाउ है दूजा॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी भगत कबीर, पृ० 324)

Repetitions, austerities, fasts or worship do not help the one, in whose mind there is love for others. (Kabir)

According to the Gurbani, those who ignore the Lord, who are entangled in love for illusory and perishable objects, and who indulge in false conduct and eat unclean things, should be classed as dogs and pigs. They die while barking, and find no place in the Court of the Master.

कूकर सूकर कहीअहि कूड़िआरा॥ भउकि मरहि भउ भउ भउ हारा॥

मनि तनि झूठे कूडु कमावहि दुरमति दरगह हारा हे॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1029)

He who is false is like a pig or dog; he dies barking in fear. He is false of body and heart and indulges in falsehood, and receives no place in His Court.

The feeling of otherness can be removed only by loving the Master and practicing Naam. There is no other method. By this method one becomes attached to the feet of the Lord and redeems himself.

जिन सतिगुर सिउ चितु लाइआ॥ तिनी दूजा भाउ चुकाइआ॥

निरमल जोति तिन प्राणीआ ओइ चले जनमु सवारि जीउ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 73)

Those who commune with the Master, their love of duality disappears; their Light is pure; their life is redeemed.

Instability of the Universe

This universe is unstable and perishable. It is continually changing. It will not be tomorrow as it is today. There is no stability in this world. It is the land of death, and like a house of sand it can be destroyed at any time.

मृत मंडल जगु साजिआ जिउ बालू घर बार॥

बिनसत बार न लागई जिउ कागद बूंदार॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 808)

The world in the perishable realm has been made like a house of sand. In no time at all, it is destroyed, like the paper drenched in water.

जग रचना सभ झूठ है जानि लेहु रे मीत ॥

कहि नानक थिरु ना रहै जिउ बालू की भीति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० १, पृ० 1429)

Know this world to be false, O friend; O Nanak, it is unstable as a wall of sand.

Everything that is seen in this world is like a cloud. It is not stable. What has been created will certainly perish one day.

जो उपजिओ सो बिनसि है परो आजु कै कालि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० १, पृ० 1429)

Whatever has been created shall be destroyed; everyone shall perish, either today or tomorrow.

This creation, like a bubble in water, is created and destroyed again and again.

जैसे जल ते बुदबुदा उपजै बिनसै नीत ॥

जग रचना तैसे रची कहु नानक सुनि मीत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० १, पृ० 1427)

Just as a bubble appears and disappears, so does the universe; says Nanak, listen, O my friend!

The universe is like a dream. It is made of dream-stuff. People come together and are separated according to the law of union and separation.

जगु सुपना बाजी बनी खिन महि खेलु खेलाइ ॥

संजोगी मिलि एकसे विजोगी उठि जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 1, पृ० 18)

The world is like a dream; the play is over in a moment; people come together by chance and go away in separation.

Whatever is seen here is some day going to perish. Every object in the universe is short-lived. Kings, subjects, houses, palaces, those who dwell in them, all the objects of the universe, gold and silver and their wearers, this body, clothes, men and women, all are perishable. The people have forgotten the Lord because of these entanglements. No one really deserves to be loved here. Many have gone, some are going, and the rest are ready to go.

राणा राउ न को रहै रंगु न तुंगु फकीरु ॥

वारी आपो आपणी कोइ न बंधै धीर ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 936)

Kings and nobles do not remain, nor do the rich or poor; each has his turn; there is no help for any one.

कहा सु भाई मीत है देखु नैन पसारि ॥

इकि चाले इकि चालसहि सभि अपनी वार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 808)

Where are your brothers and friends? Open your eyes and look! Some have gone, and some will go; everyone must take his turn.

But still one remains engrossed in this universe. Our wealth, our wife, our riches and our houses are not ours, and nothing will go with us when we leave. Why, then, is one so fond of them?

झूठै मानु कहा करै जगु सुपने जिउ जानु ॥

इन मै कछु तेरो नही नानक कहिओ बखानि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1428)

Of what are you proud? This world is like a dream. None of this is yours – Nanak proclaims this truth.

The body which comes with us at birth is also left here and does not go with us when we leave.

जाग लेहु रे मना जाग लेहु कहा गाफल सोइआ ॥

जो तनु उपजिआ संग ही सो भी संगि न होइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तिलंग म० 9, पृ० 726)

Wake up, O mind, wake up from your sound sleep; the body which comes with you at birth, that also does not accompany you.

How, then, can those who are related to this body, and how can our other possessions accompany us?

धनु दारा संपति ग्रेह ॥ कछु संगि न चालै समझ लेह ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत म० 9, पृ० 1187)

Wealth, spouse, property and household – none of them shall go along with you; you must know that this is true.

धनु दारा संपति सगल जिनि अपुनी करि मानि ॥

इन मै कछु संगी नही नानक साची जानि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1426)

Wealth, spouse and the possessions which you consider as yours; O Nanak, none of these will accompany you. Believe it to be true.

Think for a moment about how your companions have gone. All are coming or going. Where are your mother, father, grandfather, great-grand-father?

फरीदा किथै तैडे मापिआ जिन्ही तू जिणओहि॥

तै पासहु ओइ लिद गए तूं अजै न पतीणोहि॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1381)

O Farid! Where are your father and mother of whom you were born? They have passed away before you, but you still do not believe.

Everyone in this universe has to leave it in his turn.

चलना है रहना नहीं, चलना बिस्वाबीस।

सहजो तनक सुहाग पर, कहा गुंघावे सीस॥

-- सहजो बाई

Death is certain; no one can live forever, one is certain to go. Why should Sahjo, for her short married life, get her hair dressed? (Sahjo Bai)

Where have Rama and Krishna, the incarnations, great prophets and Saints, Bhim, Arjuna, Rustum and Sohrab, the warriors, gone? This universe is like a long drawn out dream.

रामु गइओ रावनु गइओ जा कउ बहु परवारु॥

कहु नानक थिरु कछु नहीं सुपने जिउ संसारु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1429)

Rama is gone; and Ravana, who had a big family, is also gone. O Nanak, nothing is lasting in this world of dream. What reliance can be placed on this life?

क्या है भरोसा जिन्दगानी का। आदमी बुलबुला है पानी का।

How can you rely on this life? Man is like a bubble of water.

Every day, every hour, every minute is bringing us nearer to the end of the body.

छिनु छिनु अउध बिहातु है फूटै घट जिउ पानी॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तिलंग म० 9, पृ० 726)

Our life is ticking away every moment; like water dripping out of a broken pitcher.

When we accompany a dead body to the cremation ground, we shout "Rama Naam is True" but in our hearts we believe in the everlastingness of the world and are doubtful of death. It is related in the Mahabharata that when Yaksha यक्ष asked Yudhishtira what was the most wonderful sight, he said:

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालयम् ।

शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमार्च्यमतः परम् ॥

-- महाभारत (3:313:116)

We see people dying every day, but live in the hope that we will live forever. What can be more wonderful! (Mahabharata)

When nothing is stable, and whatever is to happen will happen, then why should we worry?

चिंता ता की कीजीऐ जो अनहोनी होइ ॥

इहु मारगु संसार को नानक थिरु नही कोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1429)

One should worry only about a thing that can be prevented. O Nanak, in the way of this world, nothing is stable.

This body and universe are both false and unreal. Only God and the particle of God, which is in the body, are true.

साधो इहु तनु मिथिआ जानउ ॥

या भीतरि जो रामु बसतु है साचो ताहि पछानो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत हिंडोल म० 9, पृ० 1186)

Holy men judge this body to be illusion; only the Lord that dwells in it is Real.

जिउ सुपना अरु पेखना ऐसे जग कउ जानि ॥

इन मै कछु साचो नही नानक बिनु भगवान ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1427)

Know this world to be a dream or play; O Nanak, nothing is Real in it except the Lord.

In this perishable body and universe, the only real thing is the Lord Himself and His particle, the soul.

कहु कबीर इहु राम की अंसु ॥ जस कागद पर मिटै न मंसु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी भगत कबीर, पृ० 871)

Says Kabir, this is formed of the same essence as the Lord; like writing in indelible ink, it cannot be erased. (Kabir)

Know and sing the praises of the Lord and be engrossed in Him. Worldly attachments are futile. Turn away from them and love the Lord. Surrender every priceless breath, which cannot be purchased for any amount of money, to the Master and the Lord.

कबीर सूता क्या करै, जागन की करु चौप ।

ये दम हीरा लाल है, गिन गिन गुरु को सौप ॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (सुमिरन को अंग 71, पृ० 123)

O Kabir, do not sleep. Wake up! Every breath is a gem, count and surrender it to the Lord.

कहता हूँ कहि जात हूँ, कहाँ बजाये ढोल ।

स्वासा खाली जात है, तीन लोक का मोल ॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (सुमिरन को अंग 139, पृ० 130)

I say and am saying with the beat of drums, your breath is being wasted, although it is more valuable than the three worlds. (Kabir)

Warning

Everyone in this world is entangled in attachment and illusion and is unconscious and unaware of his own self, his soul. All that is seen here will remain behind. The objects that will be left behind appear to be stable, and we do not pay attention to the eternal.

जो छडना सु असथिरु करि मानै ॥ जो होवनु सो दूरि परानै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमन्नी म० 5, पृ० 267)

That which is to be left, is taken as eternal. That which is bound to happen, is considered to be far off and uncertain.

We are wasting our invaluable time on objects that will be left behind, and do not think of that which will accompany us. The body that comes with us, does not accompany us. Its form and its youth will not remain the same. How can reliance be placed on relations and objects connected with this body? It is a question of the value of life. We should keep in our minds that which we really wish to know and the ideal we wish to reach. He, who remembers death, remains free from the bondage of the world and cannot do any evil action.

जिनी चलणु जाणिआ से किउ करहि विथार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 2, पृ० 787)

They who know they are to go, why should they cast their net wide.

We understand that death will come one day and cannot be avoided, and so why should we resort to deceit and fraud in order to live a few days longer?

मरोगे मरि जाहुगे, कोई न लेगा नाम ।

ऊजड़ जाइ बसाहुगे, छोड़ि के बसता गाम ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (चैतावली का अंग 39, पृ० 62)

We are to die, and we will die; nobody will remember us. We will reside in the deserted land (burial or cremation ground) after leaving the populous village. (Kabir)

By sitting with spiritually awakened persons we come to know that death is real and life is illusory. Understand the body to be perishable, and do not be proud of it.

इसु तन धन का कहहु गरबु कैसा ॥

बिनसत बार न लागै बवरे हउमै गरबि खपै जगु ऐसा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 1, पृ० 1273)

How can one be proud of this body and wealth? It takes no time to leave them. The world wastes itself in the pride of ego.

This body is perishable and it should, therefore, be used for spiritual development. It should be used to associate with awakened persons, holy men and Saints, and for singing the praises of the Lord.

कबीर इहु तनु जाइगा कवनै मारगि लाइ ॥

कै संगति करि साध की कै हरि के गुन गाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1365)

O Kabir, this body will perish, whatever way may be followed. Either be in the company of Saints, or sing the praises of the Lord.

This body is precious only as long as the soul resides in it; otherwise nobody cares for the body.

जिचरु बसिआ कंतु घरि जीउ जीउ सभि कहाति ॥

जा उठी चलसी कंतड़ा ता कोइ न पुछै तेरी बात ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 50)

As long as soul-husband (Lord) dwells in the body-house, everyone greets you with respect. But when the soul-husband arises and departs, then no one cares for you.

Our lifespan is decreasing every day, every hour, every minute and every second. But the man who is floating on the waves of attachment is unaware of this.

This is so far as the body is concerned. In addition, man is engrossed in home and family, but these also do not accompany him when he leaves, Mahatmas tell us.

किआ तू रता देखि कै पुत्र कलत्र सीगार ॥

रस भोगहि खुसीआ करहि माणहि रंग अपार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 5, पृ० 42)

Why are you so thrilled by the sight of your son and beautifully adorned wife? You enjoy tasty delicacies, you have lots of fun, and you indulge in endless pleasures.

O man! Amongst all of these things, you are like a guest for a night who has to leave with the dawn of a new day.

जैसे रैणि पराहुणे उठि चलसहि परभाति ॥

किआ तूं रता गिरसत सिउ सभ फुला की बागाति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 5, पृ० 50)

You are like a guest for the night, who departs at dawn; then why are you so happy with your family and this pleasure garden, which will not last?

Even so, man continues to rely upon this universe, which is like the ever-moving shade of a tree.

एक रैण के पाहुन तुम आए बहु जुग आस बधाए ॥

गृह मंदर संपै जो दीसै जिउ तरवर की छाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पूरबी म० 5, पृ० 212)

You are a guest for the night, but hope to live for the ages; the houses and riches which you see are like the shade cast by a tree which is constantly moving.

Everyone has to leave in his turn. It is necessary to see this with open eyes.

कहा सु भाई मीत है देखु नैन पसारि ॥

इकि चाले इकि चालसहि सभि अपनी वार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 808)

O, what is there to love? See with your eyes open; one is gone, and another is about to go; everyone goes in his turn.

Our body, our family, and our riches will not accompany us.

चारि दिन अपनी नउबति चले बजाइ ॥

इतनकु खटीआ गठीआ मटीआ संगि न कछु लै जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कैदार भगत कबीर, पृ० 1124)

One departs after beating his drums for a little while; he does not take with him the riches he has earned or his buried treasures.

जेती समग्री देखहु रे नर तेती ही छडि जानी ॥

राम नाम संगि करि बिउहारा पावहि पदु निरबानी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 614)

Whatever possessions you have will be left behind; concern yourself with the Name of the Lord and become desireless.

पुत्र कलत्र लोक गृह बनिता माइआ सनबंधेही ॥

अंत की बार को खरा न होसी सभ मिथिआ असनेही ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 609)

Children, spouses, men and women in one's household are all bound by Maya. At the last moment, none of them shall stand by you; their love is totally false.

This universe is not to be lived in forever. Everyone has to pass his allotted time here and then go. One should not be misled by its golden colour. Once the soul leaves the body, everything else remains behind. The body, wealth and all other worldly objects then have no value.

मनमुख नाम विहूणिआ रंगु कसुंभा देखि न भुलु ॥

इस का रंगु दिन थोड़िआ छोछा इस दा मुलु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 85)

O self-willed one! You have forgotten the purpose of life; do not be deluded by the golden colour of the safflower, this will last for a few days only, and its value is very little.

High and low, rich and poor, all have to go. Death is always nearby and the last moment is approaching, and one never knows when it will come. Human birth is an opportunity for meeting the Lord. He who does not engage in devotion to the Lord and does not practice the Name, wastes his life.

रतन जनमु अपानो तै हारिए गोबिंद गति नही जानी ॥

निमख न लीन भइए चरनन सिंउ बिरथा अउध सिरानी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 9, पृ० 220)

You have wasted the precious jewel of this human life; you do not know the Way of the Lord of the Universe. You have not been absorbed in the Lord's feet, even for an instant. Your entire life has passed in vain.

Without Naam, the fear of death and the wheel of eighty-four continue. The Naam is invaluable, and can be had from the Master only. One should redeem one's life by getting Naam from a Master.

Human birth is rare. Do not waste it. Spend it in devotion to the Lord.

In this perishable body only the soul is real and immortal, and one should care for it with true devotion. m

PRAYER OR SUPPLICATION

(*Prarthna* प्रार्थना)

What is Supplication?

Prayer is called in Persian, 'Dua दुआ', which means to call. It means calling on the Lord or some other person for help.

A materialist considers this life to be a machine, the parts of which are being run by the blind forces of cause and effect, and he does not admit that there is an Ultimate Being who is directing it. But one who knows the reality, while agreeing that the law of cause and effect is working, further knows that this is being done under the orders and directions of a Supreme Being. He, therefore, while keeping an eye on the causes – and their effects, appeals to the Lord, the Supreme Cause, for help.

The Helplessness of the Materialist

We find that a materialist, while possessing all means and materials, does not reach the ultimate objectives he desires. All his material possessions do not enable him to do so. He then becomes helpless. He perceives no ray of hope in the darkness of his failure. He does not like anything. His life becomes a burden to him. He feels no interest in life, and in his despair he may commit suicide. He lives like a corpse devoid of life. As compared with this, a person who knows the reality makes an effort to gain worldly wealth, but knowing that the Lord is the ultimate Cause of all causes, leaves the fruits to Him and surrenders gladly to His Will and pleasure. The Lord may do whatever is good for him, for it is only the Lord who knows what is good for us. If the result is in accordance with his wishes, he is thankful. If it is to the contrary, he submits to it cheerfully, because he knows that

whatever is happening, is in accordance with the order and will of the Lord. He asks for the Lord's help at every step, because he knows that there is always something, that is beyond the reach of his own efforts. Crying for help in this way, is called prayer.

In reality, prayer is the gathering and stilling of the waves of the mind at the inner centre. When some desire springs up in the mind or one is worried by some worldly affliction, he thinks in his heart of the power of the Lord and looks to Him for inspiration. The heart of man is the dwelling place of the Lord. The Lord is the great storehouse of power. He is the true and complete ideal. By contemplating on Him, a man gains peace within himself and becomes powerful. When he gets this power, he is able to think of ways of getting out of his troubles. The mind gets power to put forth effort. By offering prayers, the mind gets one-pointed. A patience-giving current of thoughts is generated, which makes a man alert and active. He develops habits of patience, contentment and forbearance, and acquires courage and strength, with which to face difficulties. These are the fruits of prayer.

The wise know that there is great strength in the soul of man. The mind is related to the soul. Therefore, when the waves of the mind are stilled, they come under the influence of the soul and gain strength from it. The soul is conscious and powerful, since it is a particle of the Lord. The Lord permeates it. Man considers himself to be limited and feeble, and it is indeed true, that one becomes what he thinks himself to be. But the soul is a particle of the Lord, and the Lord is infinite. If the particle thinks of the infinite for some time, it finds itself to be infinite.

तू जुज्व हक्क कुल्ल आनस्त, अदेशाए—कुल्ल कुनी कुल्ल बाशी।

You are a particle of the infinite, and if you think of the infinite for some time, you will become infinite.

When the soul is connected with the Lord, it receives infinite strength from His Current of Powers. Although you are finite, there is a power within you which is infinite. This

is the Lord Himself. On understanding this, one begins to understand the reality of the fact, that the soul and the Lord are one. The soul takes the dye of the Lord, and becomes one with Him.

पिता पूत एकै रंगि लीने ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 5, पृ० 1141)

The Father and son are dyed in the same hue.

I and my Father are one. (Bible, John 10:30)

Those with true intelligence, go inside and pray. They then get benefit from the Merciful Current of the Lord. Those of lesser wisdom worship symbols or go to mosques or temples where there are idols, and pray before them. There are those, who know the spiritual regions and go inside and get direct help through the mind, while there are others who go to certain holy places such as rivers and so forth, and pray there. All of them get results, according to the one-pointedness of their mind and faith. No such action is without results.

Some deny the existence of God, and do not think it proper to offer prayers. The Lord is invisible and unseeable. He cannot be seen by the senses. But He permeates our soul. He is not separate from us, whether we believe in Him or not. He is the soul of our souls. He sustains them. He is in truth one – Mahatmas call Him by various names.

We have already said that prayer can be described as the stilling of one's inner feelings at the mind centre. In this, are included detachment and practice, knowledge and contemplation and worship and recitation.

Prayer is a Universal Feeling

Prayer is a universal feeling, which a person feels when discomforts, trouble, disease, danger or calamity visits him and he wishes to avoid these things; or when he wishes to satisfy some bodily need or obtain spiritual gain; or when he wants strength to face some difficulties, because he does not find sufficient power in himself; or when he wants the

help of a powerful being. We see every day that we are often obliged to ask some stronger or more capable person to help us.

When a student cannot solve a problem, he seeks the aid of his teacher. Similarly, in the case of illness, we ask a physician to treat us. A subordinate asks his officer to help him. These are examples of a kind of prayer.

When we face any difficulty, or an enemy pursues us and we find no refuge, we ask for help from the powerful Lord of the universe, or from persons in whom He is manifest. This is called prayer.

It is natural to ask a more powerful or more able person to help us, and it is all the more natural to turn for help to that Supreme Power, who is the Lord of all regions and universes and is their Creator, or to one who is one with Him. The fact is that we cannot help praying to Him. How prayer should be offered so that it may be acceptable to the Lord and to the Master, is the next point to be considered. All the religions say that supplication to the Lord or to the Master is the way to obtain Grace of every kind. It is only through prayer that spiritual advancement can be achieved. Prayer is the most natural, direct and easy means of connecting individuals with the Creator, and connecting the slave with the Lord. Every seeker needs prayer from the beginning to the end, until he realizes the Lord and merges in Him. Through prayer, all bodily, religious, national and social needs are fulfilled. The ailments of mind and body are eliminated, and prayer ultimately becomes the means of bringing about the union of the soul with the Lord. By the Grace of the Lord, the mind, which is like a crow that eats filth or a crane that eats fish, becomes pure like a swan.

किआ हंसु किआ बगुला जा कउ नदिर करेइ ॥

जो तिसु भावै नानका कागहु हंसु करेइ ॥

— आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीयान की वार म० 1, पृ० 91)

Whether you are a swan, a crow or a crane, only His Mercy is of any avail. If He so wills it, He turns a crow into a swan.

Do not extend your hand in Supplication before anyone other than the Lord and the Master

He is the Creator and Lord of the Universe. All other powers are sustained by Him. He is the Supreme Power of all powers. Whatever you wish to ask, ask it of the Lord. There is no dearth of anything in His Court. Kabir Sahib says,

साहिब के दरबार में कमी काहु की नाँहि ।

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (सेतक को अंग 16, पृ० 101)

Nothing is wanting in His Court.

Guru Arjan also says that when his kind Friend pervades everything and is everywhere present, how can His servant be in need of anything?

जा का मीतु साजनु है समीआ ॥ तिसु जन कउ कहु का की कमीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 186)

Those who have the Lord as their Friend and Companion – tell me, what else could they need?

All the gods and goddesses and lower powers draw their strength from Him. All depend on Him. If you have to ask for anything, pray to Him. Why ask of the servants? Man can be true – the Khalsa खालसा (Pure Being) – only when he does not look to anybody else. Guru Gobind Singh Ji says,

जगति जोत जपै निस बासुर एक बिना मन नैक न आनै ।

पूरन प्रेम प्रतीत सजै ब्रत गोर मड़ी मट भूल न मानै ॥

तीरथ दान दया तप संजम एक बिना नह एक पछानै ।

पूरन जोत जगै घट मै जब खालस ताहि नखालस जानै ॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (सवैये 33, 1)

One who, with the flame burning brightly, meditates in his mind on the One without thinking of another; one who is filled and adorned with complete love and affection and does not believe in fasting or the grave or the tomb; one who recognizes only One and no other and does not indulge in pilgrimages, charity, kind acts, austerities and self-discipline – the perfect light of the Lord illuminates his heart, then consider him as the immaculate Khalsa. (Sridasam.org p.712)

Guru Arjan says,

सुखदाता मै भंजनो तिसु आगै करि अरदासि ॥

मिहर करे जिसु मिहरवानु तां कारजु आवै रासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 44)

Offer your prayers to Him, the Giver of Peace, the Destroyer of fear. Showing His Mercy, the Merciful Master shall resolve your affairs.

Pray to the giver of joy and the dispeller of fear, to whom He is kind, his deeds bear fruit.

एको जपि एको सालाहि ॥ एकु सिमरि एको मन आहि ॥

एकस के गुन गाउ अनंत ॥ मनि तनि जापि एक भगवंत ॥

एको एकु एकु हरि आपि ॥ पूरन पूरि रहिओ प्रभु बिआपि ॥

अनिक बिसथार एक ते भए ॥ एकु अराधि पराछत गए ॥

मन तन अंतरि एकु प्रभु राता ॥ गुर प्रसादि नानक इकु जाता ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 289)

Praise the One and repeat His Name; remember the One, and keep the One in mind. Sing never-ending praises of the One, with body and mind meditate on the Lord, He is One and One alone. The only Lord pervades everywhere, the One has become many; by praying to the One sin departs; the One Lord pervades the body and the mind; by the Master's Grace Nanak knows that One.

Guru Ramdas says,

कीता लोड़ीऐ कमु सु हरि पहि आखीऐ ॥

कारजु देइ सवारि सतिगुर सचु साखीऐ ॥

संता संगि निधानु अमृतु चाखीऐ ॥

भै भंजन मिहरवान दास की राखीऐ ॥

नानक हरि गुण गाइ अलखु प्रभु लाखीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग की वार म० 1, पृ० 91)

Whatever work you wish to accomplish – speak of it to the Lord; He will resolve your affairs. The True Guru guarantees the Truth. In the Society of the Saints, you shall taste the Treasure of the Ambrosial Nectar. He is the dispeller of fear and is kind; He protects his servants. O Nanak, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, and see the Unseen Lord God.

Guru Arjan Sahib prays,

तुधु आगै अरदासि हमारी जीउ पिंडु सभु तेरा ॥

कहु नानक सभ तेरी वडिआई कोई नाउ न जाणै मेरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 383)

I pray to You, for the body and mind are Yours. O Nanak! It is all His greatness. Otherwise, nobody would know my name.

The strength and refuge of the Saints is the Lord, who is their Master. They pray to Him. There is no fixed place for their worship. They tell their joys and sorrows to Him alone.

मै ताणु दीबाणु तूहै मेरे सुआमी मै तुधु आगै अरदासि ॥

मै होरु थाउ नाही जिसु पहि करउ बेनंती मेरा दुखु सुखु तुझ ही पासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 735)

I have become crazy. O my Lord and Master, unto You alone I pray. There is no other place to offer my prayer; I can entrust my pains and pleasures only with You.

Always ask of the Omnipotent One. If you ask any other, you will find that he is already full of troubles and cannot give you any help.

जिसु मानुख पहि करउ बेनती सो अपनै दुखि भरिआ ॥

पारब्रह्मु जिनि रिदै अराधिआ तिनि भउ सागरु तरिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (लूजरी म० 5, पृ० 497)

To whomsoever you may pray in this world, his hands are full of his own troubles. He who prays to the Transcendent One, crosses the Ocean of the World.

It is beneficial to pray to the Omnipotent One. There is no dearth of anything with Him. To ask of the lower powers or of the gods and goddesses does not lead to complete success. They can give us benefits or boons that are within their own sphere, but they cannot save us from death and rebirth. They are all involved in this lower cycle. They cannot give salvation.

Guru Arjan says that, he who prays to the Lord, is free from all the three fevers and troubles, gets the wealth of happiness, and is saved from calamity.

तीने ताप निवारणहारा दुख हंता सुख रासि ॥

ता कउ बिघनु न कोऊ लागै जा की प्रभ आगै अरदासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (टोडी म० 5, पृ० 714)

He removes the three fevers. He takes away troubles and gives peace. He who prays to the Lord, meets with no obstructions.

It is clearly written in the holy Quran that one should call upon the Lord only for help. Crying to the Lord is the true crying. Hazrat Ibrahim told his tribesmen,

Go away. I leave you and all others, except Allah to whom you pray. I cry to my Lord. I am confident that I will not be left without help when I cry to Him.

He again said,

O followers of the book, turn your faces towards one, who is your friend and mine. We should not pray to anyone except the Lord 'Allah Talah', and should regard none other as His equal.

(Alamar Ayat 7-8)

We have as yet not seen the Lord, therefore we do not completely rely on Him and have faith in Him. When there is no complete faith, how can one's prayers be heard? But there is the Light of the Lord in the Master.

साध रूप अपना तनु धारिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1005)

The Holy Saint is the very embodiment of the Lord's form.

प्रम जी बसहि साध की रसना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 263)

God resides upon the tongues of His Saints.

गुफ्ताए—ऊ गुफ्ताए—अल्लाह बुवद गरचिह अज हल्कूमे—अब्दुल्ला बुवद ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रुमी (दफ्तर 2, पृ० 213)

His words are the words of the Lord, although they come from the throat of Abdullah (Servant of God).

The words of the Master, although they come from the throat of a human being, are the words of the Lord. To ask of the Guru, is to ask of the Lord. He is in every way powerful. If you wish to pray to Him, who is able to give life or take it away, call upon Him who is the living God and have confidence and faith in Him. Do not turn to any earthly refuge. Turn your inner attention to Him. No thought of receiving help from anyone else should ever enter the mind. The attention should be directed to Him alone. Your cries for help will reach Him. Kabir Sahib says that if a disciple is on one side of the ocean and the Guru on the other, the disciple should turn his attention to the Master. The Master will then make all his efforts successful. The Master is the King of kings. Everything is within His power. He has the power to do everything. The world of kings bows at His door.

जा कै वसि खान सुलतान॥ जा कै वसि है सगल जहान॥
 जा का कीआ सभु किछु होइ॥ तिस ते बाहिरि नाही कोइ॥
 कहु बेनंती अपुने सतिगुर पाहि॥ काज तुमारे देइ निबाहि॥
 सभ ते ऊच जा का दरबारु॥ सगल भगत जा का नामु अधारु॥
 सरब बिआपति पूरन धनी॥ जा की सोभा घटि घटि बनी॥
 जिसु सिमरत दुख डेरा ढहै॥ जिसु सिमरत जमु किछू न कहै॥
 जिसु सिमरत होत सूके हरे॥ जिसु सिमरत डूबत पाहन तरे॥
 संत सभा कउ सदा जैकारु॥ हरि हरि नामु जन प्रान अधारु॥
 कहु नानक मेरी सुणी अरदासि॥ संत प्रसादि मो कउ नाम निवासि॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी गुआरेयी म० 5, पृ० 182)

He who is the Overlord of kings and chieftains; He in whose power is the whole world; He who is the doer of all things; no one is beyond Him; pray to your Master, He will crown your efforts with success. He whose court is the highest, He whose Name sustains the devotees; He who pervades and owns all; He whose glory is present in all minds; He by remembering whom death cannot harm; He by remembering whom dry land becomes green; He by remembering whom the drowning ones swim across; O Nanak, He has heard my prayers. The Saints will have mercy on me and I will dwell in the Name.

He can give all the four boons, that is, dharma (righteousness), wealth, happiness and salvation. He has power to give all.

चारि पदारथ जे को मागै॥ साध जना की सेवा लागै॥
 जे को आपुना दूखु मिटावै॥ हरि हरि नामु रिदै सद गावै॥
 जे को अपुनी सोभा लोरै॥ साधसंगि इह हउमै छोरै॥
 जे को जनम मरण ते डरै॥ साध जना की सरनी परै॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 266)

He, who wants the four cardinal boons, he should serve the Holy Men. He, who wants to cast his woes away, should sing the Name of the Lord in his heart. He, who wants glory for himself, should live with Holy Men and give up his ego. He who is afraid of death and rebirth, should take shelter with the Saints.

If you go to the door of the Lord or the Master, go as a beggar. There is no one else before whom one should bow. He is the only one, who can listen to the prayer of one who

is caught in the whirlpool of Maya. He is the only one, who can put healing ointment on the heart that is bleeding from attachment and greed. It is only He, who can revive lost hopes. All these qualities exist only in the Lord, or in His other form, the Master. He heals bleeding hearts by sending them the Current of His Inner-Consciousness. Bhai Nand Lal says,

मुर्शिदे—कामिल इलाजे—दिल कुनद, ई इलाजे—दिल बदिल हासिल शवद ।

-- भाई नन्दलाल 'गोया'

The Perfect Master heals the heart; the healing is done in the heart.

For this reason, a disciple, whether near or far from his Master, should give up all intellectual cleverness, surrender his mind and body to Him, and place all his sufferings before Him.

जीअ की बिरथा होइ सु गुर पहि अरदासि करि ।।

छोडि सिआणप सगल मनु तनु अरपि धरि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी की वार म० 5, पृ० 519)

Whenever the heart is suffering, pray to him; give up cleverness, and surrender body and mind.

In the holy Quran it is said,

Who else is there, who would listen to the prayers of the helpless and the afflicted and remove his troubles?

Jesus Christ says in the Epistle of St. John in the Bible:

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. (St. John 14:23)

If you have to pray, pray to the Lord or to His manifested form, the Master, who can give you all.

Pray to the Living Presence of the Lord

There can be no doubt that just like asking for help in worldly affairs from one who is powerful, the asking for aid from the Power who is the fountain of all powers and wealth, is a true and effective prayer. But to sigh while praying, considering Him to be separate from us, is ignorance. He is a pure and infinite Being, but in His Mercy He dwells within and illumines our soul.

Therefore, to pray for help to that Power, which is seated in our soul, is the key to success. To pray to Him as a Being apart from us is not true prayer, for we are then praying to a Being whose existence we doubt, and there is still a feeling of egotism or separateness. Some doubt still persists as to whether or not we will receive His Grace, and there is not complete faith and confidence.

That Reality permeates our entire being, although we are not conscious of it, and the Current of Divine Power and Light is flowing inside us. When we turn within and merge in that power, our soul-force awakens within us. Just as our hidden physical strength is awakened by physical exercise, similarly, in prayer, we bring to the surface our inner feelings and emotions and through such prayer the soul awakens and we obtain spiritual benefits.

It sometimes happens that by praying to some power, apart from ourselves, our wishes are fulfilled due to self-intoxication induced by our heart-felt desires and feelings. But the illusion about the Lord being separate from us still persists. Our life is then not based on any firm foundation. We are not conscious of the treasure of powers and abilities that lies within us. Our soul is a particle of the Lord. He permeates our soul. By praying to Him and merging in Him one shares in His powers. But he who considers Him to be a separate being, cannot enjoy this wonderful pleasure and the full benefits of merging in Him. Those who think that the Lord is on high and directs the affairs of the world from there, seldom receive a response to their prayers.

The Lord is with you and within you and not far away from you. The Lord is inside you. He is none other than the spirit of your soul. Pray to Him and praise Him inside, and ask for His help.

Prayer and Effort

Should effort be given up when praying? It should be remembered that until man becomes a conscious co-worker with and under His will, he should not give up effort. It is

not the purpose of prayer or grace that you should make no effort, except to go on praying. This can be made clear by an illustration.

A boy is late for school. What would you think of him, if he were to sit down and pray, O Lord! Let me not be late. It would be proper for the boy that, while praying, he should also rely on his own effort and should walk quickly in order to reduce the delay. In the first instance, there would be more and more delay. We should take a lesson from one aspect of this illustration only. While making an effort, also extend the hands in prayer. This is the chief cause of success. A sincere desire for anything and a sincere effort for it is true prayer. This is praying in the right way.

All too often, we pray with our lips and act otherwise. Such a prayer is not granted. When a man makes a sincere effort for something from his heart, that prayer issues from the very pores of his cells, even though he may not utter a syllable. Whenever necessity arises or a calamity comes, then make an effort with firmness and confidence and pray to the Lord to remove the defects due to imperfections and weakness in you.

It is said in the holy Quran that when Moses and Haroon prayed for victory over the infidels and their men, they received the reply,

I have accepted the prayer of both of you. You should now stand firm in your efforts and not follow the example of those who do not know the reality.

The prophet Moses told his people,
Ask for help from the Lord and be firm. Do not lose courage in the face of calamity. Only he loses courage who has no refuge. The Lord and His human form, the Master, is your everlasting refuge. If in spite of effort you fail, take it to be His Will. If one loses while trying, take it to be His Will.

Which Prayer is granted?

बिरथी कदे न होवई जन की अरदासि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 819)

A devotee's prayer never goes in vain. The prayer of the Lord's humble servant is never offered in vain.

जो जो कहै ठाकुर पहि सेवकु ततकाल होइ आवै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 403)

Whatever the devotee asks of the Lord, is granted. Whatever the devotee desires of the Lord, is granted at once.

जो मागहि ठाकुर अपुने ते सोई सोई देवै ॥

नानक दासु मुख ते जो बोलै ईहा ऊहा सचु होवै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 681)

Whatever you ask of the Lord, He gives; O Nanak, whatever a devotee says, comes true.

Guru Arjan says that the Lord, the Father, has ordained that whatever a child asks shall be granted.

पिता कृपालि आगिआ इह दीनी बारिकु मुखि मांगै सो देना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 5, पृ० 1266)

The Father has ordained that whatever a child asks shall be given to him, here and hereafter.

In the Sura Momin of the holy Quran, it is stated,

Cry to me and your request will be granted.

Again it is said in the Sura Bakr,

O Prophet: whenever any of my creatures asks you about me, tell him that I am with him; if he cries, I hear him and grant his request.

It is said in the Bible,

What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (St. Mark 11:24)

It is again stated,

Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (St. Mathew 7:7,8)

It is seen, however, that people ask for thousands of things and all of their prayers are not granted. Then, what is the meaning of the above words? Let us see which kind of prayer is granted, and why every prayer cannot be granted.

The prayer that can redeem sinners and cure physical, mental and spiritual disease must be made with full faith in

the Lord and the conviction that He is all-powerful. Our feelings which have not found utterance are not hidden from Him. He is cognizant of every feeling and thought. He knows the sufferings of both the good and the evil.

घट घट के अंतर की जानत ॥ भले बुरे की पीर पछानत ॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (चौपाई 387)

He knows what is within the heart; He knows the sufferings of both the good and the bad. (Sridasam.org p.1387)

The dwelling up of a strong desire is in reality the making of a prayer. If we should surrender our desires or acts to the Lord before expressing them, then there would be no obstacle in the way of success.

That prayer is right, which is full of yearning and pangs. It should be made with patience and full confidence, and with a loving heart, in all humility and submission.

मन जिउ अपुने प्रभ भावउ ॥

नीचहु नीचु नीचु अति नान्हा होइ गरीबु बुलावउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (देवगंधारी म० 5, पृ० 529)

O mind! Stand in awe of the Lord. Become the lowest of the low, the very least of the tiny, and speak in utmost humility.

Prayers should be made according to the directions of the Master and in order to reform one's life. When you pray in this way, you express gratitude for favours received. Gratitude cannot be expressed by mere words that have no connection with our conduct. Since the Master is the Shabd and the Shabd is His form, He is in the Shabd. He who makes the Shabd a part of his life, becomes dear and acceptable to the Master. He says,

If you love me, do as I say.

सतिगुर बचनु बचनु है नीको गुर बचनी अमृतु पावैगो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा म० 4, पृ० 1311)

The Word of the True Guru is the most Sublime and Noble. Through the Guru's Word, the Amrosial Nectar is obtained.

Christ said,

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (Bible, John 14:23)

In order that the prayer may be acceptable, it is necessary that the disciple should be devoted to the Mas-

ter and His words should dwell in the heart. He can then ask for anything and it will be given to him. Feel happy in remembering the Lord and he will fulfil your desires. Christ says,

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (St. John 15:7)

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. (Psalm 37:4)

If you crave forgiveness for your sins, you should first forgive others and then pray. Christ says,

When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. (St. Mark 11:25)

The situation is, therefore, that when we commit any bad act and ask forgiveness of the Lord, He then forgives us; but at the same time He warns us,

Christ, when he forgave a woman for committing adultery, said, Go and sin no more. (St. John 8:11)

A judge may reduce a sentence, but this does not mean that the criminal will become a better man. He may well do the same evil deeds again. But according to the spiritual law, by which the Master forgives sin, he also tells the sinner to sin no more, so that he may turn away from sin and may be able to enter higher regions. What good can it do a man to cry, if he goes on taking poison? It is very necessary for him to stop taking poison. How can prayer be of any help, if there is no sincere aversion to doing sinful deeds?

Ceaseless effort to make our life pure and truthful is true prayer. This draws to us the Mercy of the Lord, and His Grace and limitless blessings then fulfil the sincere and pure desires of our heart. By merely asking of the Lord or the Master that we may love Him, we do not, as a matter of fact, begin to love Him. But if we consciously pray for a truthful and pure life and try to elevate our life, we will then be moulded as He wills and will begin to realize His presence and to share His love.

To pray effectively, it is necessary that we should conduct our life as desired by the Master, and that we should experience happiness in the remembrance of the Lord. Our prayers should be in harmony with the Will of the Lord and the Master, and we should feel happy in whatever He wills. A peculiarity of human life is the love that knows how to give, but not how to take. But one becomes entitled to all the powers of the Lord by loving Him. He benefits the world through them, but remains aloof from all. We have to love the Lord. It is His Will to give or not to give to us. Our duty is to remain happy in the sphere of His Will. It is, therefore, considered unbelief for the Saints to pray. Maulana Rumi says,

कुफ़्र बाशद नज़्दे-शान दुआ, क-ऐ अला अज़ मा बिगर्दा कज़ा ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 3, पृ० 188)

Saints rejoice in the Will of the Lord. They consider it disbelief to pray. O Lord! Take away this suffering from me.

Intellectual and Logical Difficulties in Prayer

Many would like to know why we should pray, when the Lord knows all our needs. A father, for example, takes care of the expenses of his family's food, clothing and education, without being asked to do so. If we are to be given only after asking, then it seems possible that we might not be given something owing to our lack of knowledge or comprehension. It is also possible that we might ask for something, which would be to our disadvantage. We know from experience that we sometimes pray for things and get them, but when they turn out to our disadvantage, we are sorry that we prayed for them. Just as a father knows what is good and essential for his child, similarly, our heavenly Father also knows what we really need and what will be to our advantage. Saints, knowing that the Lord knows our needs, advise us to pray with this in mind.

Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. (St. Mathew 6:8)

वडी वडिआई बुझै सभि भाउ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 463)

Great is His glory, for He understands all our affections.

एक एक की पीर पछानै। घट घट के पट पट की जानै।।

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (चौपाई 388)

He knows the inner thoughts of all hearts; He knows the sufferings of the good and evil. (Sridasam.org p.1387)

The Saints have given examples of short prayers for our guidance, and some of these are cited later. The purpose of these prayers is to help us to know our needs and to have them fulfilled. When we receive their fulfilment, we should be thankful. The Saints ask us to pray for the fulfilment of our desires, as a child asks its mother with full confidence.

हम बारिक तूं गुरु पिता है दे मति समझाए ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 450)

We are children; You are our Father and Master, guide us.

हम बारिक मुगध इआन पिता समझावहिगे ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कलिआन म० 4, पृ० 1321)

We are ignorant and simple children; O Father, instruct us.

Even if our prayer for the removal of a calamity, may not be granted, it always happens that we get added strength to bear it and in this way we better realize our latent capacities. We sometimes think of ways and means, by which these calamities and sufferings can be removed.

Internal Difficulties – The Heart's Ground for Prayer

The Heart's Ground for Prayer: It is necessary to prepare the heart for praying. This consists of praying in humility and with reverence and devotion. Guru Angad says that the Lord knows all, and is the cause of all that happens. He has the power to fulfil our desires by Himself. Stand before Him and pray in all humility.

आपे जागै करे आपि आपे आगै रासि ।।

तिसै अगै नानका खलिइ कीचै अरदासि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 2, पृ० 1093)

He knows all; He can do everything Himself; o Nanak! Stand before Him and beg humbly and earnestly.

Guru Arjan Sahib also enjoins praying with both hands folded.

दुइ कर जोरि करउ अरदासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 5, पृ० 1152)

With my palms joined together, I offer this prayer.

The second requirement for praying is that the wavering of the mind should be stilled, and that the mind should be focused on some inner centre and concentrated there again and again. Until the mind is stilled at some centre, both the seekers and the followers of the inner path, weep at the antics of the mind. When we withdraw our thoughts from the external world and try to focus them on a centre in the invisible world, our pent-up thoughts and fears due to our sins in the past come to the surface of themselves. They should either be eliminated by calm and cool reasoning or removed by praying. The best way to remove these difficulties is to conjure up the form of the Master inside ourselves and to lose ourselves in contemplation of Him. It is this kind of constant contemplation which opens the way to the Lord and makes us fit for His Mercy.

In inner praying, a seeker sometimes meets with difficulties, due to receiving no apparent response to his prayers. He may then begin to feel that there is no truth behind it. Not feeling the presence of the Lord, the seeker feels as if he is praying in a void. Some seekers rely on the fact that though they do not see the Lord, He sees them. But this state does not last for long. On closing the eyes, we see a vast expanse of darkness and see nothing beyond it. We take this silence as a response to our prayers. The senses cannot function in this silence, and the seeker feels in this state of unconsciousness that he has lost the way. He wishes to walk further on the strength of faith, but he falls again and again. It is a very delicate stage and requires the guidance of a Master. In addition, a certain amount of dryness enters our mind.

It does not want to pray. If it is forcibly made to pray, the desire to do so fades away. A seeker has to spend a long time in this stage of dryness and darkness, and many a time his efforts prove fruitless and he does not find the abode of the Lord. These illusions of Maya and Kaal mislead a seeker. The method of removing them is to be steady in contemplating on the inner image of the Master and in trying to achieve one-pointedness.

Three Methods of Prayer

Prayer is performed in three ways:

- One is audible, in which we say prayers with our tongue. Ordinary people repeat certain prescribed passages from religious scriptures or recite prayers composed by some Saint. Some think that these are not very beneficial, since they represent the feelings of the Saints, while true prayer is an inner cry from the individual's own heart. Unless our prayer represents the inmost feelings of our heart, we do not derive benefit from it. Reciting other people's prayers is like wearing the clothes of others which do not fit us. The prayers of Saints and Holy Men serve us as a model, in as much as similar feelings may arise in our own minds, and in this way the reciting of such prayers helps us.

- The second method of praying is mental, in which the tongue does not come into play. In this kind of prayer, concentration is necessary. Before doing so, one feels the presence of the Lord who pervades everywhere, and prays for His help and becomes absorbed in His contemplation. While so absorbed, pray. For this, concentration is necessary. The mind should be withdrawn from everything outside and should be focused on the presence of the Lord or the Master. Then give vent to the feelings of your heart, with devotion and gratitude; confess your weaknesses and ask for help. Open your heart to the Lord. For doing this successfully, patience and firm determination are necessary. It cannot be done in a hurry. It is like learning to play a violin or some

other instrument, which requires patience and determined practice.

In the beginning the mind does not take to it, but slowly and slowly, with remembrance of the Lord and contemplation of the Guru, the mind becomes still and success is achieved. When a seeker makes a little progress by means of audible and mental prayers, he should wait for a while for His Mercy and Grace.

When this practice is perfected, he will perceive, after praying, the flow of peace and bliss in his soul, and the mind will become joyful. After tasting this joy, the mind does not wander. These are signs of the descent of the Mercy of the Lord and the Master.

Ordinary people consider this to be all. A seeker, however, should be thankful and should all the more desire for union with the Lord.

- In such union, a seeker rises above the bondage of the body and reaches the presence of the Lord and the Master, from whom all blessings originate. He then sees in operation, the invisible hands which cannot be described. The seeker feels that he is no longer in his body and that he has entered a new kingdom. He floats in spiritual regions and becomes a dweller in them in this very life. He sees the Lord face to face, and enjoys this supreme happiness.

Because of the power of the Lord's attraction, the seeker's heart, mind and soul become dyed in the colour of the Lord. This can be called mystical prayer, the third method. It has been described by many Saints who have experienced it. This kind of prayer can be found even today. But this kind of prayer can be achieved only through the special Mercy and Grace of the Lord. The effort of the seeker does not count. Such an experience, even for a moment, leads to faith in the Lord and the Master, and produces confidence in spiritual progress and experience. All sins, selfishness and fears vanish. We progress, and become the recipients of the inner Grace of the Saints.

Praying Aloud

Does praying aloud affect us? Yes. It makes us serious for a time and elevates the thoughts. But if the matter is considered deeply, we will realize that when we do not know the Reality, praying loudly holds us back from preparing the spiritual ground, and the thought of gaining praise from others sometime enters our mind. There is danger of our becoming impostors by praying aloud. Such prayers, which contain no truth and do not come from the heart, are simply meant to please others. Physical sensations produce in us mental or emotional happiness and joy. If we were to make some spiritual progress, then we might gain some higher experience from such emotional happiness. But until we are acquainted with the secret of the soul, we cannot gain it. Human passions cannot influence the Lord. It is not necessary to cry loudly to enable our prayers to reach Him. He is not far off. His unseen ears are everywhere. He knows the secrets of every heart and mind, and He can fulfil every desire. Spiritual wealth cannot be gained by praying aloud. One should offer silent prayers with the tongue of the soul, and should pray that he may always act according to the Will of the Lord.

He dwells in every heart. He sees everything and knows our secret feelings. The Lord hears even the footfall of an ant. In the holy Quran, it is commanded, 'In all humility', cry silently to the Lord.' It is again stated, 'There is no need to make any noise, for He hears everything.

Guru Gobind Singh says,

हाथी की चिंगार पल पाछे पहुँचत ताहि चीटी की पुकार पहिले ही सुनीअतु हैं॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (अकाल उस्तत 4:256)

The trumpeting of the elephant reaches Him a little later, but He hears the cry of an ant even sooner than that. (Sridasam .org p.36)

There is no need for a seeker to utter loudly when praying. Even the silent current of his thought reaches the other side. The voice of thought is sufficient.

Praying in Public

In praying before the public, we exaggerate our feelings. If we pray for a thing without desiring it in our heart of hearts, that is, if our head and heart do not wish earnestly for a thing, our prayer is nothing but a public and futile repetition of words. But if our prayers are sincere, and we wish for a thing from our heart, then the Lord, on hearing our prayer, grants it. Can the recital of prayers in public, which have no relation to the feelings of the heart, bear any fruit? Can the words we utter reach that omnipotent Lord more rapidly than our inner feelings? No, never.

Audible prayers become mere formalities. They do not arouse our feelings, nor do we become absorbed in them. The prayers that spring from the heart of someone else cannot by repetition achieve their object unless they come from our hearts also. These prayers cannot be beneficial and cannot change our lives for good. The arrow which is shot without the bow being drawn to the breast cannot hit the target. Similarly, words which are not spoken from the heart do not reach the Lord. He knows our real needs, even before we speak.

The Vedas, the holy Quran and other religious scriptures, all insist on congregational prayers for the good of all. Can such prayers be of any benefit? Yes, certainly. If a number of persons offer prayers for the common good in humility and with sincere hearts, they get the Grace of the Lord and the prayers are never in vain. To wish for the common good is to live within the Will of the Lord. Many benefits come from it. It is a good way of keeping nations and societies awakened. It is customary amongst the Sikhs to offer common prayers. It is specially mentioned in their scriptures.

नानक नाम चढ़दी कला॥ तेरे भाणे सरबत दा भला॥

Nanak, praised be the Name. May all prosper by Thy Will.

The Gurus give examples of such prayers and these will be mentioned later.

In Sura-i-al-i-Imran in the Quran it is stated,

O our Sustainer, keep us on the right path. Do not let our minds wander. Shower Thy Mercy on us. Surely, no one can exceed You in Grace. (Quran 3:8)

In the same Sura the following prayer occurs:

O our Sustainer, forgive us for our lapses; overlook the excesses we have committed. Keep us steady on the right path, and give us victory over people who deny the truth. (Quran 3:147)

What is the purpose of our offering such prayers? We pray in order to elevate ourselves, or to benefit the hearers, or to put before the Lord the sufferings and needs of all, or to tell the people of our devotion. The prayers of the last kind are useless.

There is a mention of such a specific prayer in Sura-i-Bakr. It says,

O our Sustainer! If there has been any default or mistake on our part, do not take us to task; forgive us. O Lord! Do not place on us the restrictions and limitations which You imposed on those who preceded us. O Lord! Do not subject us to a burden we cannot bear. O God! Forgive and pardon us. Have mercy on us. You are our Lord and Master. Give us victory and success over the disbelieving people. (Quran 2:286)

Place of Worship

It is not necessary to offer prayer in a religious place. What is necessary is an inner urge only. Sufficient solitude is necessary, so that there may be no obstruction or interference. It may be in the home or outside of it. Any place, where solitude can be had, is suitable. You can use your bedroom for the purpose. There may be religious books or pictures there to remind you of Holy Men whom you revere. If there is no room available, a particular portion of a room may be used. If this is not available, then any place such as a temple, satsang hall, mosque or church can be used. If this is not available, pray while walking alone, whether on the plains or in the hills, in a jungle or on the bank of a stream. Concentrate in the forehead, on the Lord or the Master, and place your inner feelings before Him. These places have some in-

fluence on prayers, but in reality no particular place or temple is required. All this world is the temple of the Lord.

इहु जगु सचै की है कोठड़ी सचे का विचि वासु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 2, पृ० 463)

This world is the body of the Lord, and He pervades it.

That place is holy, where the Lord is remembered. All this earth is sacred. All places are fit for prayers. Al-Nisai says,
For me the whole earth is a mosque and is sacred. Whenever the time of prayer arrives, my followers can say their prayers wherever they happen to be.

The Lord is omnipresent. He created the entire universe, and He is its Lord. He does not dwell in man-made temples.
God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. (The Acts 17:24)

Homes, jungles, waste lands, hills, rivers – wherever you bow to the Lord – is holy.

All is holy where devotion kneels. (O. W. Holmes)

All this creation is of the Lord. He dwells everywhere. It is not necessary, therefore, to turn your head in any particular direction while praying. The main thing is a firm conviction that the Lord is inside you. There should also be the conviction that we are responsible for our own actions. In the holy Quran it is said:

Whether East or West, all belongs to the Lord. You may turn your head in any direction and you will face the Lord, for He is present everywhere. (Sura Albakr 14-3)

It is further stated:

There is no great benefit in turning your face in a particular direction. The true holiness lies in one's firm conviction in the Lord and the judgment day. (Albakr 22-2 Quran)

The truly sacred place for praying is this body, within which dwells the Lord.

हरि मंदरु एहु सरीरु है गिआनि रतनि परगटु होइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती बिभास म० 3, पृ० 1346)

This body is the Temple of the Lord, in which the Jewel of Spiritual Wisdom is revealed.

*We are the Temple of the living God (Bible, II Corinthians 6:16)
Do you not know that you yourselves are God's Temple, and that
God's Spirit dwells in you? (Bible, I Corinthians 3:16)*

The heart is the mosque, and the body adorns it. Go inside and pray to the Lord. It is not necessary to go anywhere else in order to pray. Search the Vedas and the Puranas, and you will find that all say that He is residing in the heart.

कत जाईऐ रे घर लागो रंगु ॥ मेरा चितु न चलै मनु भइओ पंगु ॥
एक दिवस मन भई उमंग ॥ घसि चंदन चोआ बहु सुगंध ॥
पूजन चाली ब्रह्म ठाइ ॥ सो ब्रह्म बताइओ गुर मन ही माहि ॥
जहा जाईऐ तह जल पखान ॥ तू पूरि रहिओ है सभ समान ॥
बेद पुरान सभ देखे जोइ ॥ ऊहां तउ जाईऐ जउ ईहां न होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बसंत भगत रामानन्द, पृ० 1195)

Wheream I go when my own home is filled with bliss. My consciousness does not go out wandering. My mind has become crippled. One day, a desire welled up in my mind. I ground sandalwood, along with several fragrant oils. I went to God's temple, and worshipped Him there. That God showed me the Guru, within my own mind. Where ever I go, I find water and stones. Lord! You are totally pervading and permeating in all. I have searched through all the Vedas and the Puranas. I would go there, only if the Lord were not here in my heart. (Ramanand)

That Beloved, to whom we are to pray, is in reality inside us and we are wandering outside in the world. The Nectar of the Lord is in the corner of our heart, while we are remaining thirsty.

यार दर खाना ओ मन गिर्दे—जहां मीगरदम,
आब दर कूज़ा ओ मन तश्ना लबाँ मीगरदम ।

*The Beloved is in the home, while I search in the world outside.
The water is in the pot, and I am wandering in thirst.*

When you pray, enter the closet of the body and shut the outer doors. Do not let the attention wander outside. Open your heart to the Lord within; He will listen to the prayer made in this secret spot. Christ said:

But when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. (St. Mathew 6:6)

This body is the temple in which, the soul resides. By closing its doors, evil thoughts are kept away and thoughts of the Lord gain strength. The Lord is within us. We cannot see Him with our outer senses. It is only the Inner Eye that can see Him. The gross eyes cannot see Him.

When the gross eyes are closed, then the inner eye which can see Him, opens. Guru Nanak says those eyes which can see the Lord are different from the outer eyes.

नानक से अखड़ीआं बिअनि जिनी डिसंदो मा पिरी॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 5, पृ० 577)

O Nanak! Those eyes are different, by which He can be seen.

The Gurus say that on gathering together the attention from the ten senses, the Lord appears within.

दस इंद्री करि राखै वासि॥ ता कै आतमै होइ परगासु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 236)

Those who keep the ten senses under their control, their souls are enlightened.

In order to reach the depth of true prayer, the senses, which lead to the spreading of attention, should be restrained. Close the lips and forget about the body, and unite with the Lord or the Master at the seat of the soul within.

In order to pray correctly, it is necessary that we should go inside and shut the outer doors, withdraw our attention from the body, and direct it to the feet of the Beloved. In this sacred place, pray to the Master, the incarnation of the Lord. He will appear and will lend a helping hand. Such a prayer will be accepted. To lose oneself in the remembrance of the Lord, with inner purity and sincere feelings, is true prayer. This should not be merely for show or ostentation. It should be with sincere feelings and not mere verbal effusion. If a prayer is made with true inner feelings, then the all-powerful Lord listens and invaluable benefits accrue from His Mercy.

Conditions for Prayers

The first condition for praying is that there should be a Being to whom prayers are offered. One should have full

faith in the Lord or in His form, the Master, in whom He is manifested. When there is no faith or belief in His power, there can be no true prayer. We have read about the Lord in books or heard about Him from the Saints. He is manifested in the Saints. He who has seen a Saint, has seen the Lord.

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. (St. John 14:9)

We have our Master to pray to, and a disciple should ask Him for His aid at every step. There should be full faith in His powers, and full love, confidence and humility. The prayer should be pure in thoughts and offered in humility, free from selfishness, filled with love and full of confidence. There should be no doubt or disbelief. Such a prayer made in humility does not go in vain. With a humble mind, surrender all to His Merciful Grace.

मैं नाही कछु हउ नही किछु आहि न मोरा ॥

अउसर लजा राखि लेहु सधना जनु तोरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विलावल भगत सधना, पृ० 858)

I am nothing; nothing is mine. Protect me from disgrace; I am Thy servant. (Bhagat Sadhana)

Such a prayer inspires the soul and lifts it up towards the Lord.

The Necessity of Absorption

While praying, keep yourself in the presence of the Lord and give up all thoughts about the body. If you think on the one hand of the Lord, and on the other of the body, your thoughts will be divided. You are then a worshipper both of Kaal काल (the negative power) and Dayal दयाल (God). You should go into His presence with the coverings of the mind and body removed. You alone, in your humility, should be there. Then only, you and your Lord will be there. To remain always with the Lord is to carry out His orders. A wonderful love for the Lord will then awaken in you.

The relationship between us and the Lord is that of a particle and the whole. When we are fully united with Him, then no thought of the body will remain and egotism will

disappear. The conscious Current of the Lord will, in this way, give us a new life, and all calamities and afflictions will be removed. Under these conditions, when we give up bodily actions in remembrance of God, a new life-giving Current of the Lord enters us, and our material and spiritual deficiencies are removed.

The Necessity of Truth and Contentment

For praying truly and well, it is necessary that our lives should be based on truth. Our conduct should be pure. There should be truth in our heart and mind. We should speak the truth. Truth is related to conduct. Truth and conduct go together. Wherever truth is mentioned there is talk of conduct, for truth comes first and then right conduct.

The common saying is:

‘जत सत को धारण करो, जती-सती बनो।’

Practice truth and right conduct, and become truthful and holy.

It is necessary to preserve the purity of one's life and its influence. If one practices truth, then whatever he says will be true. Nature will help him. It is necessary to have contentment also. As long as there is no contentment, the mind does not give up spreading out, and without one-pointedness there can be no true prayer. Guru Nanak says that if prayer is made with truth and contentment, the Lord will hear it and will call the devotee to sit near Him, and that such a prayer is undoubtedly granted.

सतु संतोखु होवै अरदासि ॥ ता सुणि सदि बहाले पासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 878)

The prayer made with Truth and Contentment is heard, and the devotee is seated near the Lord.

Praying with the Heart

One's prayers should come from the heart. Our heart, head and tongue should agree. Pray in such a manner, that your inner feelings are aroused, every pore begins to weep, and all the veins become like the strings of a violin. The

feeling of love should pour forth and you should become absorbed in your prayer. Your discrimination should awaken. Consider the Lord to be present and a witness. Present your inner feelings to Him. There should be nothing whatever between you and the Lord. Ask for His help in all humility. There should be no egotism or showiness.

There is no need to stand on high platforms and to cry loudly.

कबीर मुलां मुनारे किआ चढहि साईं न बहरा होइ ॥

जा कारनि तू बांग देहि दिल ही भीतरि जोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1374)

O Kabir, the priest cries from the minaret, but the Lord is not deaf. He, whom you are calling, is inside you.

No Particular Language or Words are necessary for Prayers

No particular language is necessary for praying. If, while one is praying, he considers himself bound by some formula, the inner flow of love is not continuous. One is thus deprived of full spiritual benefit. Long and learned phrases are not necessary. A prayer should be replete with inner feelings. Although long words and phrases may satisfy our intellect, they lead to one becoming subject to the disease of ostentation. By becoming involved in the structure and recitation of the words, we become far removed from the true feeling of the heart. Our prayers then do not correctly represent the state of our heart and conduct. Our condition becomes that of a grave made of lime and mortar which contains the corpse of an infidel.

It may be observed that we often indulge in hypocritical prayer, in which our heart and head are not in agreement. In Tibet, people go about in the streets with a prayer wheel, a machine that repeats prayers for them. When it is turned, the names written on it are turned, and it is considered that the names have been repeated so many times. People even earn money for turning a prayer wheel once or twice. How can such prayer benefit anyone?

Even when our prayers appear to be beautiful and full of feeling, but our inner life is impure, then all our prayers would be false in the sight of the Lord. But if our prayers express our inner feelings and our heart is dyed in humility and love, then our prayers are heard and granted by the Lord. It is not wise to deceive ourselves and others, for the reality cannot be kept hidden and will someday become known. To repent, after realizing a mistake, is the first step towards reformation, and the next step is to reform one-self. The temptation to indulge in sense pleasures incites us to commit sins, and we have to pay for them. We reap as we sow.

Maulana Rumi has given a beautiful example of prayer. Moses, one day, met a shepherd who was praying in loving words,

O Lord, where are You? I will be Your servant. I will mend Your clothes, and will comb the hair of Your head. O Lord, let my life be sacrificed to You. I will sacrifice my wife and children and my home for You. I will supply You with milk. If You are willing, I will serve You. I will kiss Your hands and feet. I will stay on guard at Your gate while You sleep. I will bring milk, ghee, cheese, fried cakes, pots of curd and other good things for You to eat and drink. I will sacrifice all my goats for You, and will ever remain weeping in longing for You.

On hearing this, Moses said,

Fie on you. You are mad. You are no longer a believer, but an infidel. What is all this useless and impure talk? Keep silent. Your impurity has polluted the world and soiled the silken cloth of religion. If you will not stop, the fire of wrath will come and destroy the earth. The Lord, like the sun, does not need these things, for He has no body. Nor does He depend on hands and feet. If your talk is meant for those who have become one with the Lord, then also it is ludicrous. If a believer is called by the name of Fatima he would feel offended, because it is the name of a woman. He would feel annoyed and would beat you. The Lord is free from birth and death, and to pray to Him as though He had hands and feet is to insult Him.

On hearing this, the shepherd said,

O Moses, you have sealed my lips. I am bewildered and on fire. He tore his clothes and began to weep, and then ran away to the jungle. Moses then heard the voice of the Lord saying, Alas! Why have you separated my seekers from me? I sent you to the world to bring about union, and not separation.

तू बराए वसल करदन आमदी, नै बराए फ़सल करदन आमदी।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रुमी (दफ़तर 2, पृ० 123)

You have come for uniting and not for separating. (Rumi)

The Lord then continued to speak to Moses, saying:

Everyone remembers Me in accordance with his own language and temperament. Whatever the shepherd offered, I accepted. I am not pleased with you, for I regard the refusal of such offers as reprehensible. My duty is to shower Grace. By telling beads it is not I who become pure, but they who do so. O Moses, I do not look at the outside, but at the inner state. I accept whatever men say when they pray, even if it is poorly expressed, when it comes from the heart. The feelings of the heart are the real thing; the words merely express them. I want real longing from the heart. Generate yearning within yourself. Kindle the fire of love which burns away all thoughts and languages. O Moses, those who observe rules and regulations are different from evolved and devoted souls. For the lovers, every breath produces yearning. Nobody levies a tax on ruined villages. It is not necessary to wash the blood of the martyrs. Their blood is purer than purest water. Their faults are better than hundreds of good actions done by others. Do not expect guidance from observers of form. The religion of love is different from other forms of worship. For lovers, the Lord is the only religion and creed. If a ruby does not bear the seal, it does not matter.

When Moses heard these angry words of the Lord, he ran to the shepherd and told him,

I have brought good news for you. The Lord has accepted your prayers. Your unbelief stands on the same footing as belief. Your belief is the light of life. You may say whatever you like without any fear.

The shepherd replied,

I am now above these matters. When you scolded me, I took a different turn. But then I crossed the skies in one bound and became a confidant and close friend of the Lord. My condition is now beyond description.

Time for Prayers

Most people think that a certain time is necessary for prayers, and that this must be found when they are not busy with their duties. But to pray properly, it is not necessary to spend a long time on reasoned speeches. One should express his inner feelings in simple language while praying. All times are suitable for prayer. Morning, evening and bed-time are particularly beneficial.

The difficulties relating to the time and place for prayer are fewer than the difficulties of praying inwardly. We do not know what we should pray for and how to pray. It is therefore necessary to pray, Lord, teach us to pray. We should take advantage of the examples of the prayers composed by Saints and Holy Men.

When to Pray

It is usually the case that a man calls for the help of the Lord, when he is helpless or in poverty. But when he attains affluence, he no longer feels the need of prayer and thinks that his own strength and social forces will suffice for the future. He thus makes a big mistake.

Man should pray under any and all conditions. When in difficulty, he should pray for the solution of his problems, and when there is no solution, for strength to bear them or to keep up his courage. When, as a result of his efforts, he sees prospects of success, he should pray for the Mercy and Grace of the Lord, in order to avoid relying on his own efforts and his egotism.

Unless His Grace and Mercy join with our own efforts, no real success can be achieved. When the heart's desire has been obtained, then sacrifice all in thankfulness and gratitude to Him.

The Working of Prayer

To confess our sins in prayer and to think that they are thereby washed away or removed is a mistake. This kind of mistake keeps us away from true spirituality. Our sins will only be forgiven, when the Lord or the Master forgives them. Actually, such prayers may become the cause of evil. A man may offer such prayers and then keep on committing sins without hesitation. And all the while, he goes on praying under the false impression that his sins will be forgiven as a result of his prayers.

The Master comes to persuade men to give up sin and to unite them with the Lord. Our duty is to act in accordance with His wishes and to give up all evil deeds, which are worldly. We may thus save ourselves from sins and by the practice of Naam and remembrance, unite ourselves with the Lord. Love for the Lord and the Master reforms us, and makes us follow the path of the Lord. Man may forgive, but it is the all-pervading power of the Master, which ultimately reforms a sinner.

How can we become true, how will the chain of untruth be broken? O Nanak, it is written that the Master's Will should be obeyed.

To cry to the Lord for forgiveness, and to think that we can then commit more sins is a mistake. Diseases are punishments for sins. When there has been a sin, it can only be atoned for by undergoing suitable punishment. The root cause of all sins is identifying oneself with the body. Unless we rise above bodily considerations, thoughts of sensual pleasures and desires to enjoy them do not disappear.

बहु सादहु दूखु परापित होवै ॥ भोगहु रोग सु अंति विगोवै ॥

हरखहु सोगु न मिटई कबहू विणु भाणे भरमाइदा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1034)

Many a seeker gets into trouble because his search for pleasures leads to disease. The desire for pleasures does not go away without submitting to His Will. Till then, he wanders, lost and confused.

To think that His Mercy is dependent on requests made through prayer, is a mistake. He does not forgive or punish as a result of whether or not we ask for forgiveness. This is to make prayer an instrument to permit the committing of sins. The Master acts with great circumspection and consideration. On the one hand, He forgives sins; and on the other, He restrains the disciple from committing them in the future, so that he may become clean and pure.

Prayer cannot change the principle of truth, nor can it enable one to understand it. It is through the attraction of inner love and yearning and by obeying the directions of the Master that we are led to the truth. Our prayers to understand the truth need not be said loudly. Such prayers can be made mentally or by living properly and in His Will.

The purpose of prayer is to lead us to act according to the wishes of the Lord. We are weak and feeble. We wish to reach the Lord with the aid of the Mercy and Strength of the Master. Even though we may fall at every step, that power helps us. It is a law of spirituality that if a disciple takes one step on the path indicated by the Master, the Master takes a hundred steps to meet him. He is the bestower of all benefits. He is beyond praise or comprehension. He is immortal and limitless.

चरन सरन गुर एक पैड़ा जाइ चल, सतिगुरु कोटि पैड़ा आगे होइ लेत हैं।
 एक बार सतगुरु मंत्र सिमरन तात्र, सिमरन तांहि बारंबार गुरु हेत हैं॥
 भावनी भगति भाइ कौडी अग्र भग राख, तांहि गुरु सरब निधान दान देत हैं।
 सतगुरु दयानिधि महिमा अगाध बोध, नमो नमो नमो नमो नेति नेति नेति हैं॥

-- भाई गुरुदास, कवित्त सवैये (77:111)

If you take one step to take refuge in the Master, the Master meets you on the way by taking hundreds of steps. If you remember the Master just once, the Master remembers you again and again. Even if your devotion is as small as a fragment of a cowrie shell, the Master showers all benefits on you. The Master is all Merciful, His praise is beyond understanding; I bow again and again to the one and incomprehensible Master. (Bhai Gurdas)

Effects of Prayer on Others

Prayer is a great power. In prayer, the current of our contemplation unites with the Lord, and the seeker receives many wonderful benefits as a result. Can others be benefited through our prayers? Since the soul is a particle of the Lord, all souls are interrelated. The Lord pervades all. To wish well to everybody is, therefore, in accordance with His Will. The currents of goodwill that emanate from great souls are for all living beings and benefit them. There is particular mention of this in the Sikh Scriptures. They say that by remembering great souls, the inner feelings are aroused and a connection is made with them. Such a prayer results in spiritual progress, and in the end, one prays for the good of all.

तेरे भाणे सरबत दा भला ।।

May all prosper in accordance to Thy Will.

After Muslims complete their prayers, they pray for the believers and unbelievers, that is, for Muslims, Hindus and others. Buddhists pray for the welfare of all. Christ said that one should pray for his enemies. Hindus pray for the welfare of all living beings, both sentient and insentient. The practitioners of Christian Science cure those, who are ill, by means of prayers. To wish well to others is in accordance with His Will. Those who are experts in the science of telepathy know that one is affected by the thoughts of others, whether they be near or far. It has also been observed that the prayers of one person sometimes result in another person having some experience, which may be in the form of an inner vision.

Sincere prayer from the heart of the disciple reaches the Master, and remembrance of the disciple by the Master produces peace and bliss in the disciple. This is really a form of telepathy. In this way, we can connect our thoughts with the Master and can also use them for the good of others. To benefit another, it is necessary that we first connect our thoughts with the Lord and then contemplate on the form of the other person and pray that he will be connected with

the Master also. During such prayer, we have to feel the presence of the Lord and surrender our attention to His merciful and loving will. In this way, we lay the foundation for good to come to others.

Why all our Prayers are not granted

It is a common experience that all things which one asks for in prayer are not received. The reason for this is that we do not know the Mercy of the Lord, and ask for things that are not for our real good. That Power wants our evolution and progress. When that Power finds that what is asked for would involve the devotee further in the world, He does not grant it. If the Lord does not grant us the things we ask for, in order to save us from sinning, this is for our good.

In the Christian scriptures, it is said:

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (Bible, James 4:3)

We are entangled in bodily and sensual pleasures. Our vision does not rise above them. If we were to receive all we ask for, we would certainly be involved in more sensual pleasures and our sins would increase.

The question is:

When the Lord or Master hears all our prayers and has the power to grant them, why does He not do so?

In this connection, it should be understood that man is merely one part in the machine of the universe, and is related to all other parts. Our desires, therefore, affect the whole world. Our vision being limited, we cannot see beyond ourselves and our surroundings. But the Lord or the Master can see the whole of the universe. He knows everything from the beginning to the end. He knows the devotee's genuine needs also. For example, the residents of a city which is being oppressed by unbearable heat may pray for rain, while the farmers are praying for more sunshine to ripen their crops. The human intellect is limited, and an individual does not know whether what he is asking for would in the long run be for his good. He simply looks to the immediate circum-

stances and is unaware of the future. Relying on his limited intelligence, he often prays for something that would harm him. In his haste, he demands many things and then realizes his mistake and is thankful that his prayer was not granted, for otherwise he would have suffered a great loss.

It is said in the holy Quran,

Just as a man prays for his good, he often asks for things that are harmful.

The fact is that man is very hasty and short-sighted. The Lord or the Master knows our past, present and future. He knows when a thing asked for is not for our good, and therefore does not grant it. It often happens that a seeker asks for something, which is not to his real advantage. He presses for it, and a promise may be made, but the thing is not given to him. A child may ask his mother for poison. Owing to his insistence, the mother may make a promise, but she will never give the poison to the child, even though she may outwardly consent to do so. It is not for the good of the child, but he does not know this, owing to his ignorance. The Saints, therefore tell us that we should always pray to the Lord:

नाथ कछुअ न जानउ ॥ मनु माइआ कै हाथि बिकानउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जैतसरी भगत रविदास, पृ० 710)

O Lord! I know nothing. I have been sold into the hands of the Mind and Maya. (Ravidas)

Nizami Sahib says,

बर आं दाम ए मसलहत खाहे-मन, किह बर मसलहत मी शवद राहे-मन ।

रहे-पेशम आवर किह अंजाम कार, तू खुशनूद बाशी व मन रुस्तगार ।

-- निजामी साहिब

O my well-wisher, lead me to that which is for my good. Show me the path that leads to Your pleasure and to my salvation.

The Lord and the Master are omniscient and know fully well what is for our good and what would do us harm. It is said in the holy Quran,

O Lord, give us in this world that which will help us hereafter also, and save us from the sufferings of hell.

Is it Necessary to Pray to the Lord?

The Lord is not pleased with the words of one's praise. They make no change in the Current of Mercy and Grace, which is being showered on us, for He is the embodiment of knowledge, love and mercy. Of course, by praying in humility and faith, we can take more advantage of that Current of Mercy. But he does not stand in need of vocal prayers, for He knows our hidden feelings.

Prayers cannot make any change in the Current of Mercy. It is what it is. But prayers can bring us into harmony with this Current. It is not necessary to beg for our needs. This often becomes an obstruction.

The Lord is love. Is it proper for us to ask Him to be more loving? He knows all. Can we tell Him anything that He does not know already? Can we change His perfection? Is it necessary to pray to Him for more Mercy, when He is already giving us more than we deserve? By not voicing our feelings, we come nearer to His Presence and Grace. He is eternal. He is the same in the beginning, the present and the end.

आदि सचु जुगादि सचु ॥ है भी सचु नानक होसी भी सचु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 1)

True from the beginning, true through the ages; He is true and shall be true.

The Lord is the embodiment of truth. Truth emanates from Him continually, without His being reminded of it. How can man, with his limited intellect, advise Him? The Current of His Mercy is flowing everywhere. It is taking care of us of itself. It knows what is for our good. It is present everywhere. It perceives our feelings and hears us. Where then is the necessity to pray before Him?

जत कत देखउ तत तत तुम ही मोहि इहु बिसुआसु होइ आइओ ॥

कै पहि करउ अरदासि बेनती जउ सुनतो है रघुराइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 205)

Wherever I look, I see You dwelling there; to whom should I Pray? The Lord hears all.

It is our duty to be in harmony with Him and thus to derive the utmost benefit. It is very necessary that we should meditate on Him in our heart, so that His reflection may shine within us. The soul is a particle and an image of Him and shares His wonderful qualities. To learn to understand the Lord is a continuous process and to succeed in it, we should surrender all our thoughts, powers and desires at His feet. It is strange that while we say that the Lord is present everywhere and is eternal, we try to tell Him about ourselves. Are we thankful to the Lord for all the gifts and mercies shown to us? If we are sincerely thankful, we become deserving of more Grace even without asking for it.

Guru Arjan in the fifth canto of Sukhmani Sahib of the Adi Granth speaks of the many gifts and blessings we are enjoying and tells us how to express our gratitude for them.

जिह प्रसादि छतीह अमृत खाहि ॥ तिसु ठाकुर कउ रखु मन माहि ॥

By His Grace, you partake of the thirty-six delicacies. Enshrine that Lord and Master within your mind.

जिह प्रसादि सुगंधत तनि लावहि ॥ तिस कउ सिमरत परम गति पावहि ॥

By His Grace, you apply scented oils to your body. Remembering Him, the supreme status is obtained.

जिह प्रसादि बसहि सुख मंदरि ॥ तिसहि धिआइ सदा मन अंदरि ॥

By His Grace, you dwell in the palace of peace. Meditate forever on Him within your mind.

जिह प्रसादि गृह संगि सुख बसना ॥ आठ पहर सिमरहु तिसु रसना ॥

By His Grace, you abide with your family in peace. Keep His remembrance upon your tongue, twenty-four hours a day.

जिह प्रसादि रंग रस भोग ॥ नानक सदा धिआईऐ धिआवन जोग ॥

By His Grace, you enjoy tastes and pleasures. O Nanak, meditate forever on the One, who is worthy of meditation.

जिह प्रसादि पाट पटंबर हढावहि ॥ तिसहि तिआगि कत अवर लुभावहि ॥

By His Grace, you wear silks and satins. Why abandon Him, to attach yourself to another?

जिह प्रसादि सुखि सेज सोईजै ॥ मन आठ पहर ता का जसु गावीजै ॥

By His Grace, you sleep in a cozy bed. O my mind sing His Praises, twenty-four hours a day.

जिह प्रसादि तुझु सभु कोऊ मानै॥ मुखि ता को जसु रसन बखानै॥
By His Grace, you are honoured by everyone. With your mouth and with your tongue, chant His Praises.

जिह प्रसादि तेरो रहता धरमु॥ मन सदा धिआइ केवल पारब्रह्म॥
By His Grace, you remain in the Dharma. O mind, meditate continually on the Supreme Lord God.

प्रभ जी जपत दरगह मानु पावहि॥ नानक पति सेती घरि जावहि॥
Meditating on God, you shall be honoured in His Court; O Nanak, you shall return to your true home with honour.

जिह प्रसादि आरोग कंचन देही॥ लिव लावहु तिसु राम सनेही॥
By His Grace, you have a healthy, golden body; attune yourself to that Loving Lord.

जिह प्रसादि तेरा ओला रहत॥ मन सुखु पावहि हरि हरि जसु कहत॥
By His Grace, your honour is preserved. O mind, chant the Praises of the Lord, Har Har, and find peace.

जिह प्रसादि तेरे सगल छिद्र ढाके॥ मन सरनी परु ठाकुर प्रभ ता कै॥
By His Grace, all your deficits are covered; O mind, seek the Sanctuary of God, our Lord and Master.

जिह प्रसादि तुझु को न पहुँचै॥ मन सासि सासि सिमरहु प्रभ ऊचे॥
By His Grace, no one can rival you; O mind, with each and every breath, remember God on High.

जिह प्रसादि पाई दुलभ देह॥ नानक ता की भगति करेह॥
By His Grace, you obtained this precious human body; O Nanak, worship Him with devotion.

जिह प्रसादि आभूखन पिहरीजै॥ मन तिसु सिमरत किउ आलसु कीजै॥
By His Grace, you wear decorations; O mind, why are you so lazy? Why don't you remember Him in meditation?

जिह प्रसादि अस्व हसति असवारी॥ मन तिसु प्रभ कउ कबहू न बिसारी॥
By His Grace, you have horses and elephants to ride; O mind never forget that God.

जिह प्रसादि बाग मिलख धना॥ राखु परोइ प्रभु अपुने मना॥
By His Grace, you have land, gardens and wealth; Keep God enshrined in your heart.

जिनि तेरी मन बनत बनाई॥ ऊठत बैठत सद तिसहि धिआई॥
O mind, the One who formed your form, standing up and sitting down, meditate always on Him.

तिसहि धिआइ जो एक अलखै ॥ ईहा ऊहा नानक तेरी रखै ॥
*Meditate on Him – the One Invisible Lord. Here and hereafter,
 O Nanak, He shall save you.*

जिह प्रसादि करहि पुन बहु दान ॥ मन आठ पहर करि तिस का धिआन ॥
*By His Grace, you give donations in abundance to charities;
 O mind, meditate on Him, twenty-four hours a day.*

जिह प्रसादि तू आचार बिउहारी ॥ तिसु प्रभ कउ सासि सासि चितारी ॥
*By His Grace, you perform religious rituals and worldly duties;
 Think of God with each and every breath.*

जिह प्रसादि तेरा सुंदर रूपु ॥ सो प्रभु सिमरहु सदा अनूपु ॥
*By His Grace, your form is so beautiful; Constantly remember
 God, the Incomparably Beautiful One.*

जिह प्रसादि तेरी नीकी जाति ॥ सो प्रभु सिमरि सदा दिन राति ॥
*By His Grace, you have such high social status; Remember God
 always, day and night.*

जिह प्रसादि तेरी पति रहै ॥ गुर प्रसादि नानक जसु कहै ॥
*By His Grace, your honour is preserved. By Guru's Grace, O
 Nanak, chant His Praises.*

जिह प्रसादि सुनहि करन नाद ॥ जिह प्रसादि पेखहि बिसमाद ॥
*By His Grace, you listen to the sound current of the Naad. By
 His Grace, you behold amazing wonders.*

जिह प्रसादि बोलहि अम्रित रसना ॥ जिह प्रसादि सुखि सहजे बसना ॥
*By His Grace, you speak ambrosial words with your tongue. By
 His Grace, you abide in peace and ease.*

जिह प्रसादि हसत कर चलहि ॥ जिह प्रसादि संपूरन फलहि ॥
*By His Grace, your hands move and work. By His Grace, you are
 completely fulfilled.*

जिह प्रसादि परम गति पावहि ॥ जिह प्रसादि सुखि सहजि समावहि ॥
*By His Grace, you obtain the supreme status. By His Grace,
 you are absorbed into celestial peace.*

ऐसा प्रभु तिआगि अवर कत लागहु ॥ गुर प्रसादि नानक मनि जागहु ॥
*Why forsake God, and attach yourself to another? By Guru's
 Grace, O Nanak, awaken your mind.*

जिह प्रसादि तू प्रगटु संसारि ॥ तिसु प्रभ कउ मूलि न मनहु बिसारि ॥
*By His Grace, you are famous all over the world. Never forget
 God from your mind.*

जिह प्रसादि तेरा परतापु ॥ रे मन मूड़ तू ता कउ जापु ॥

By His Grace, you have prestige; O foolish man, meditate on Him!

जिह प्रसादि तेरे कारज पूरे ॥ तिसहि जानु मन सदा हजूर ॥

By His Grace, your works are completed; O mind, know Him to be close at hand.

जिह प्रसादि तूं पावहि साचु ॥ रे मन मेरे तूं ता सिउ राचु ॥

By His Grace, you find the Truth; O my mind, merge yourself into Him.

जिह प्रसादि सभ की गति होइ ॥ नानक जापु जपै जपु सोइ ॥

By His Grace, everyone is saved. O Nanak. Meditate and chant His Chant.

आपि जपाए जपै सो नाउ ॥ आपि गावाए सु हरि गुन गाउ ॥

Those, whom He inspires to chant, chant His Name. Those, whom He inspires to sing, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord.

प्रभ किरपा ते होइ प्रगासु ॥ प्रभू दइआ ते कमल बिगासु ॥

By God's Grace, enlightenment comes. By God's Kind Mercy, the heart-lotus blossoms forth.

प्रभ सुप्रसन्न बसै मनि सोइ ॥ प्रभ दइआ ते मति ऊतम होइ ॥

When God is totally pleased, He comes to dwell in the mind. By God's Kind Mercy, the intellect is exalted.

सरब निधान प्रभ तेरी मइआ ॥ आपहु कछू न किनहू लइआ ॥

All treasures, O Lord, come by by Your Kind Mercy. No one obtains anything by himself.

जितु जितु लावहु तितु लगहि हरि नाथ ॥ नानक इन कै कछू न हाथ ॥

As You have delegated, so do we apply ourselves, O Lord and Master. O Nanak, nothing is in our hands.

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 269)

One should not forget the giver of the blessings when one receives blessings. Those who forget Him, do not remember death.

दाति पिआरी विसरिआ दातारा ॥ जाणै नाही मरणु विचारा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 676)

The gift is a blessing; the giver is forgotten; the fool does not think of death.

If, on receiving His bounty, we do not show sincere gratitude, but merely express verbal thanks, we deceive both

ourselves and the Lord. We cannot hide the emptiness of our gratitude from the Lord and the world. One makes himself liable to be punished by such behaviour.

Fruits of Prayer

The purpose of prayer is to connect one's inner self with the Lord, and to become absorbed in Him. Prayer is the essence of spirituality; through it, we begin to realize Him.

Prayer is the best relaxation and recreation. The soul, mind and body gain blissful rest and happiness, which cannot be obtained by any other means. Even with the minimum of sleep, no harm is caused to the mind or body.

We find that in prayer, one's inner stability increases, fearlessness is augmented, and inner purity is obtained. Diseases can also be cured in oneself and in others. At times of need and danger unexpected help is received. These experiences show that it is necessary to pray to the Divine Power. When no human efforts can avail, an appeal to the Lord and the Master brings the needed help.

Where all human efforts fail, there prayer succeeds.

A deep impression is created on the human mind by prayer. Even if one's fate is not changed by prayer, we are certainly changed. Our whole attitude towards meeting a calamity or affliction changes. The power of the mind to strive for salvation is strengthened. When the angle of vision changes, the whole world changes. The earth and the sky take on a different colour. A man feels very much perturbed when a calamity comes, but when the angle of vision is changed, he bears the calamity cheerfully. The highest form of prayer does not consist in the actual act of praying, but in awakening in the Lord. When this state is reached, diseases disappear, sins are destroyed, and death becomes non-existent. True prayer consists in increasing love in the inner self for the Master, and merging in Him. When we are in communion with Him, then by coming in contact with the

Lord, the inner powers of our soul are awakened. Prayers for selfish gain and for spiritual progress are very different. As compared to spiritual prayer, the other prayer is of no consequence. Reference has already been made to this point.

Stages in the Development of Prayer

After some time, the devotee begins to feel more happiness and peace in his inner spiritual progress than in his bodily comforts. The following prayer occurs in the Brahadarnayaka Upanishad:

असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

-- ब्रह्दारण्यक उपनिषद् (1:2:28)

Lead us from untruth to Truth, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality.

As the gaze of the devotee is turned away from outer things, he begins to feel that all worldly pleasures are unreal. He experiences the Everlasting and Eternal Being, and worldly pleasures appear to be transitory and perishable. He, therefore, thinks it of no value to ask for worldly comforts.

किआ मांगउ किछु थिरु नाही ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत कबीर, पृ० 692)

What should I ask for? All is but transitory.

All the world is busy eating, drinking and making merry, but a devotee has no liking for or interest in these activities. He attends only to the essential needs of the body, and spends the rest of the time in communion with the Lord. He prays, O Lord! Take me out of the ocean of this world. You are my only refuge.

खात पीत खेलत हसत भरमे जनम अनेक ।।

भवजल ते काढहु प्रभू नानक तेरी टेक ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडड़ी म० 5, पृ० 261)

Many lives have been spent in eating, drinking and making merry. Take me out of the ocean of the world. O Lord, Nanak relies on you.

In accordance with the teachings of the Gurus, the devotee looks after the body, only so that the Lord may dwell in his heart and his tongue may repeat His Name.

घटि वसहि चरणारबिंद रसना जपै गुपाल ॥

नानक सो प्रभु सिमरीऐ तिसु देही कउ पालि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़े की वार म० 5, पृ० 554)

May the holy feet of the Lord dwell in my heart, and may my tongue repeat the Name of the Lord; O Nanak, remember the Lord who preserves the body.

He is conscious of his ignorance on this path, and knowing his weaknesses, he extends his hands in prayer for help.

मो कउ तारि ले रामा तारि ले ॥

मै अजानु जनु तरिबे न जानउ बाप बीटुला बाह दे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गौड भगत नामदेव, पृ० 873)

O Lord, take me across; I am ignorant, and do not know the way. Help me, O Lord! (Namdev)

As the disciple's inner sight changes, so does his prayer. In the beginning, he is conscious of the body and of bodily needs. He thinks it necessary to pray for them. But as his Inner Eyes are opened, he begins to feel the spiritual needs, and his prayers change. He knows that he has to control the senses and still the mind in order to reach the spiritual regions and the original home of the soul.

This is not an easy task. The impressions of many births are in the mind and his inclinations are based on them. He cannot give up his old ways. He sometimes turns to spiritual seeking, while at other times he is drawn the other way by the needs of the self and the body. He sometimes succeeds, while at other times he succumbs. His heart is not in the world or its wealth, but the mind cannot yet remain fixed in the Lord all the time. He feels that he is full of sins, while at the same time people are calling him good.

फरीदा काले मैडे कपड़े काला मैडा वेसु ॥

गुनही भरिआ मै फिरा लोकु कहै दरवेसु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1381)

O Farid! My clothes are black and my dress is black. I am full of sins, but people call me a Dervesh – a holy man.

The devotee gets tired of this unavoidable conflict and wishes to give it up. He gives it up for some time, but the love of the Lord does not let him wander. The waves of hope spring up in him, and he again turns to Him.

मारग चलते जो गिरै, ता को नाहीं दोस ।

कह कबीर बैठा रहै, ता सिर करड़े कोस ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (कहनी और कथनी का अंग 31, पृ० 85)

He, who falls while walking, is not to be blamed; O Kabir! He who does not move, has all the way to go. (Kabir Sahib)

Unless all the ten senses are controlled and the mind is turned inward, there is no Light in the soul.

दस इंद्रि करि राखै वासि ॥ ता कै आत्मै होइ परगासु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी म० 5, पृ० 236)

He who controls the ten senses, in his soul, there is Light.

The diseases of the mind are very dangerous, but they appear very sweet to the devotee. One cannot give them up even though he may be tired of them. A lustful person cannot easily give up lust, even though he knows its bad results. For overcoming these diseases, he needs the help and strength of some powerful personage such as the Master.

गुरु के बल मन को मारो ।

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (18:2:4, पृ० 133)

Control the mind by the strength of the Master. (Saar Bachan)

To gain victory over the mind, the help of the Master is very necessary. By the strength of the Master, the mind that is entangled in attachment and Maya awakens.

सिमरि सिमरि सिमरि गुरु अपुना सोइआ मनु जागाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 758)

Awaken your sleeping mind by remembering the Master.

Maulana Rumi also says that the mind cannot be controlled without the help of the Master.

Ask for the Lord of the Lord

For the needed help, cry to the Lord or His incarnation, the Master,

O Lord! We are cunning, hard-hearted, crafty and lustful. But take us across in spite of all this. You are all-powerful, You can give us refuge. Save us through Your Grace. Jap (repetition of names), Tap (austerities), rules of discipline, cleanliness and self-discipline cannot rid us of our faults. O Lord! We are in utter darkness. Pray, take us out of it. Favour us with a kind and merciful glance.

Guru Nanak says,

कुचिल कठोर कपट कामी ॥ जिउ जानहि तित तारि सुआमी ॥
तू समरथु सरनि जोगु तू राखहि अपनी कल धारि ॥
जाप ताप नेम सुचि संजम नाही इन बिधे छुटकार ॥
गरत घोर अंध ते काढहु प्रभ नानक नदर निहारि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा म० 5, पृ० 1301)

Cunning, hard-hearted, crafty and lustful am I; O Lord! Take me across despite my faults. You are powerful and the giver of refuge. Preserve me by Your Will. Jap, Tap, Name, cleanliness, self-discipline will not rid me of my weaknesses. O Lord! Through Your Grace take Nanak out of this utter darkness.

He again prays:

हा हा प्रभ राखि लेहु ॥

हम ते किछू न होइ मेरे स्वामी करि किरपा अपुना नामु देहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 675)

O Lord! Save us. We can do nothing by ourselves. The only way to control the mind is to listen to the Melody of the Name. Please give this to us. O Lord! Save us.

We can do nothing by ourselves. By Your Grace give us the Name.

हरि के जन सतिगुर सत पुरखा हउ बिनउ करउ गुर पासि ॥

हम कीरे किरम सतिगुर सरणाई करि दइआ नामु परगासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बूजरी म० 4, पृ० 492)

O Servant of the Lord, O True Guru, O Primal Being, I offer my prayers to You, O Guru. I am an insect and a worm, O True Guru, I seek Your Sanctury; please, be merciful and bestow upon me the Light of Naam, the Name of the Lord.

Yogis of the past, learned men, ascetics, yatis (self-disciplined men) and men of letters, all became tired of their

efforts to find the true way and failed. Nothing they did was of any avail against the mind. None of their efforts succeeded in controlling the mind. The only effective way is the practice of the true Shabd or Name, and this can be had only from a Master.

धुन सुन कर मन समझाई ॥
 कोटि जतन से यह नहिं माने। धुन सुन कर मन समझाई ॥
 जोगी जुक्ति कमावें अपनी। ज्ञानी ज्ञान कराई ॥
 तपसी तप कर थाक रहे हैं। जती रहे जत लाई ॥
 ध्यानी ध्यान मानसी लावें। वह भी धोक्खा खाई ॥
 पंडित पढ़ पढ़ वेद बखानें। विद्या बल सब जाई ॥
 बुद्धि चतुरता काम न आवे। आलिम रहे पछताई ॥
 और अमल का दखल नहीं है। अमल शब्द लौ लाई ॥
 गुरु मिले जब धुन का भेदी। शिष्य विरह धर आई ॥
 सुरत शब्द की होय कमाई। तब मन कुछ ठहराई ॥

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (9:9, पृ० 93)

Control the mind by listening to the Melody.

It will not be controlled by any other method. The mind can only be controlled by hearing the Melody;

The yogi practices yoga, while the learned increase their knowledge;

the ascetics are tired of austerities, and the practice of self-discipline also failed them; the devotees engage in mental contemplation and are deceived;

The pandits read the Vedas and enlarge their knowledge, but fail; keenness of intellect does not help, and inaction leads to regret. No other practice can help. Practice listening to the Shabd.

When the Shabd is realized the Master is found, and the disciple attends on Him with detachment, when the practice of Surat-Shabd is perfected, then only is the mind controlled. (Saar Bachan)

After receiving the wealth of Naam, the wandering of the mind comes to an end. It then, does not wish to remain away from the Lord, but wishes to live with Him forever.

माई मै धनु पाइओ हरि नामु ॥ मनु मेरो धावन ते छूटिओ करि बैठो बिसरामु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वसंत म० 9, पृ० 1186)

O mother! I have been given the Lord's Name; my mind has stopped its wavering and is now still.

In this state the devotee feels that the Lord is always with him. He hands over all his sufferings and worries to Him, and is unmoved by either pain or pleasure. He is convinced that the Lord is thousands of times more intelligent, wise, strong and merciful than himself and that He looks after His devotee and is his greatest well-wisher. He hands over his worries and his intellect to Him, and remains content with His Will. His intellect becomes keen, and his prayers become perfect. He surrenders everything to the Lord and says, O Lord! You are the refuge of all living beings. You came here for the sake of all. Whatever You will is good for me. This is my only prayer.

जो तुधु भावै साई भली कार ॥ तू सदा सलामति निरंकार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 4)

Whatever meets with Your approval is right conduct. You are the ever-existing formless One. (Jap Ji)

जीअ जंत सभि सरणि तुम्हारी सरब चिंत तुधु पासे ॥

जो तुधु भावै सोई चंगा इक नानक की अरदासे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (खिलावल म० 1, पृ० 795)

All beings and creatures seek the Protection of Your Sanctury; all thought of their care rests with You. That which pleases Your will is good, this alone is Nanak's prayer.

नानक नाम चढ़दी कला। तेरे भाणे सरबत का भला ॥

O Nanak! Praised be the Name. May You bless all.

In the end, after attaining joy in surrendering to the Lord's Will, the seeker gives up praying. He knows that the Lord knows all. He remains happy in the state ordained by the Lord; he loves all actions of the Lord.

जत कत देखउ तत तत तुम ही मोहि इहु बिसुआसु होइ आइओ ॥

कै पहि करउ अरदासि बेनती जउ सुनतो है रघुराइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गडड़ी म० 5, पृ० 205)

Wherever I look, You are there. This is my firm conviction. To whom should I pray, when the Lord hears everything?

जिथै रखहि बैकुंठु तिथाई तूं सभना के प्रतिपाला जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 106)

Wherever He dwells, there is heaven.

तेरा कीआ मीठा लागै ॥ हरि नामु पदारथु नानकु मांगै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 394)

Your acts are like Nectar to me. Nanak prays for the gift of the Name only.

When the omniscient One knows all, to whom can we pray? When He is present in every heart, to whom should we make our supplication?

हरि अंतरजामी सभ बिधि जाणै ता किसु पहि आखि सुनाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 624)

The Lord knows all and is omniscient. To whom then should we pray?

किआ दीनु करे अरदासि ॥ जउ सभ घटि प्रभू निवास ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा म० 5, पृ० 1304)

What can the lowly say in prayer, when the Lord is present in all hearts?

The Saints have attained this state, and it seems to them to be infidelity to pray and to doubt His Grace. Saints always remain reconciled to His Will. They are absorbed in Him. The devotee and the Lord become one. The Lord is in control of the devotee, and whatever desire springs up in the heart of the devotee, is at once granted by Him. Wherever the devotee may go, the Lord goes, and He helps him at every step, just as a mother helps her little child. Guru Arjan says,

जो मागहि ठाकुर अपुने ते सोई सोई देवै ॥

नानक दासु मुख ते जो बोलै ईहा ऊहा सचु होवै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 681)

Whatever is asked is given by the Lord; o Nanak! Whatever is said by Him proves to be true, here and hereafter.

जह जह काज किरति सेवक की तहा तहा उठि धावै ॥

सेवक कउ निकटी होइ दिखावै ॥

जो जो कहै ठाकुर पहि सेवकु ततकाल होइ आवै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 403)

Whatever the work of the devotee may be, the Lord hastens to do it. He always shows Himself to be with the devotee. Whatever he asks from the Lord, the same comes to pass at once.

Kabir Sahib says that his mind became as pure as the water of the Ganges. The Lord followed him, saying,

कबीर मनु निरमलु भइआ जैसा गंगा नीरु ॥

पाछे लागो हरि फिरै कहत कबीर कबीर ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1367)

O Kabir! The mind has become pure like the water of the Ganges. The Lord follows me, saying, 'Kabir, Kabir.'

The hunger of the devotee is satisfied when he meets the Lord, and he then no longer feels hungry or thirsty. He receives from the Lord the treasure of Naam, and this gives him all the nine powers. He gets whatever his heart desires. His prayers never remain unanswered.

जिस का पिता तू है मेरे सुआमी तिसु बारिक भूख कैसी ॥

नव निधि नामु निधानु गृहि तेरै मनि बांछै सो लैसी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 5, पृ० 1266)

When You are his Father, O Lord, how can he be hungry? He receives the Name and the nine miraculous powers from You, and he gets whatever he desires.

बिरथी कदे न होवई जन की अरदासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विलावल म० 5, पृ० 819)

The prayer of the Lord's humble servant is never offered in vain.

He now knows the reality of prayer. To pray means that one is still not perfect. But when the Lord makes a man perfect, he lacks nothing.

बचनी तोर मोर मनु मानै जन कउ पूरनु दीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत रविदास, पृ० 694)

May my mind surrender to Your Word; please bless Your humble servant with this perfection.

What can a devotee ask for, when the Lord is always with him? The devotee is absorbed in the form of the Lord; both become one. Who is to ask and from whom? What a wonderful description of this state has been given by Guru Arjan Dev:

ना ओहु मरता ना हम डरिआ ॥ ना ओहु बिनसै ना हम कड़िआ ॥

ना ओहु निरधनु ना हम भूखे । ना ओसु दूखु न हम कउ दूखे ॥

अवरु न कोऊ मारनवारा ॥ जीअउ हमारा जीउ देनहारा ॥

ना उसु बंधन ना हम बाधे ॥ ना उसु धंधा ना हम धाधे ॥

ना उसु मैलु न हम कउ मैला ॥ ओसु अनंदु त हम सद केला ॥
 ना उसु सोचु न हम कउ सोचा ॥ ना उसु लेपु न हम कउ पोचा ॥
 ना उसु भूख न हम कउ तृसना ॥ जा उहु निरमलु तां हम जचना ॥
 हम किछु नाही एकै ओही ॥ आगै पाछै एको सोई ॥
 नानक गुरि खोए भ्रम भंगा ॥ हम ओइ मिलि होए इक रंगा ॥

— आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 391)

He is deathless, so I am fearless; He does not perish, so I do not grieve. He is not a pauper, and I am not hungry; He is not in pain, so I do not suffer. He is the one who gives life; He is free from bondage, and we are not bound; He does not have to toil, so I have no entanglements. He has no impurities, so we have no impurities. He is bliss, and we are happy in His Will; He has no anxiety so I have no cares. He is not stained, and we too are not stained; He is not hungry, and we have no thirst. He is pure, and we are pure because of Him; we are nothing; He is the only one; He is both in front and behind. O Nanak! The Guru removes all delusion and doubts; I have become one by uniting with Him.

What Should be Asked of the Lord and the Master

The Master is the mouthpiece of God. It is the Master in whom the Lord is manifest. Just as we can go to a sea-beach and bathe, enjoy the splashing of the waves, and offer flowers and sweets to the sea, similarly, the Master is the beach of the limitless ocean of the consciousness of the Lord. The Master is full of spiritual consciousness, and the Light of the consciousness of the Lord is in Him. He is omniscient and knows all our needs and requirements. If a spiritually hungry devotee sits beside the Master in all humility, is this in any way less than prayer? He knows the heart and mind of everyone.

Ask for the Name from the Master and Saints and beg of them for their Grace

We should pray to the Master to unite us with the Lord, as those in whose heart the Lord dwells sleep peacefully. We should pray,

My Master, I thirst for the sight of the Beloved. I ever remember His feet and hope to see Him in my heart.

In the Saints the Lord Himself is present, having assumed their form.

साध रूप अपना तनु धारिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 5, पृ० 1005)

The Holy Saint is the very embodiment of the Lord's form.

O Saints! I have come to You as I have heard that the Lord is kind to His devotees. I have taken shelter with You. O Lord Hari! Save the honour of Your slave. I have been separated from You for many ages. O Lord! Unite me with You. A great fire is consuming my mind and body. O Master! I rely on You. Hear my prayer. This is my only supplication before Your Saints, that they may, in their kindness, make me one with You.

माई मोहि प्रीतमु देहु मिलाई ॥

सगल सहेली सुख भरि सूती जिह घरि लालु बसाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 5, पृ० 1267)

O Mother, unite me with the Beloved; all my friends in whose houses dwells the Lord, sleep peacefully.

सिमरउ चरन तुहारे प्रीतम रिदै तुहारी आसा ॥

संत जना पहि करउ बेनती मनि दरसन की पिआसा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 5, पृ० 1268)

I remember Your holy feet, and pine to see You; I pray to the Saints. My heart thirsts to see You.

करउ बेनती साधसंगति हरि भगति वछल सुणि आइओ ॥

नानक भागि परिओ हरि पाछै राखु लाज अपुनाइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (टोडी म० 4, पृ० 712)

When I prayed to the Saints; the Lord, who is kind to His devotees, appeared; O Nanak, He hastened to them to save their honour and make them His own.

चिरी विछुंन मेलि प्रभ मै मनि तनि वडड़ी आस ॥

गुर भावै सुणि बेनती जन नानक की अरदासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 4, पृ० 996)

O Master, if it pleases You, please listen to the prayer of servant Nanak. That You may unite me with God, from whom I have

been separated for so long! This is the great hope of my mind and body.

करउ बेनती संतन पासे ॥ मेलि लैहु नानक अरदासे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 759)

O Saints, Nanak prays to You to make him your own.

जिनी सखी सहु राविआ तिन पूछउगी जाए ॥

पाइ लगउ बेनती करउ लेउगी पंथु बताए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तिलंग म० 1, पृ० 725)

I will ask of the friends who have found Him; I will fall at their feet and learn the path.

O Master! We are insects of Maya; have mercy on us and give us the Light of the Name. O Master, beloved of the Lord, the Transcendent Being, I pray to You.

हरि के जन सतिगुर सतपुरखा बिनउ करउ गुर पासि ॥

हम कीरे किरम सतिगुर सरणाई करि दइआ नामु परगासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी म० 4, पृ० 10)

O humble servant of the Lord, O True Guru, O Primal Being: I offer my humble prayer to You, O Guru. We are like insects; we take shelter in You; have mercy and give us the Light of the Name, the Name of the Lord.

Bhai Gurdas has given a beautiful example of prayer by a disciple. He says, O Master! I am a sinner. I am separated from You, and am a very low and worthless fellow. I have all the faults. I am in the habit of stealing and committing adultery. I am a gambler. I have an eye on the houses of others. I am a back-biter, an evil-doer and indolent, and am deceiving everyone by my hypocrisy. I am intoxicated with lust and anger and am full of greed, attachment and egotism.

हउ अपराधी गुनहगार हउ बेमुख मंदा ॥

चोरु यारु जूआरि हउ पर घरि जोहंदा ॥

निंदकु दुसटु हरामखोरु ठगु देस ठगंदा ॥

काम क्रोध मदु लोभु अहंकार करंदा ॥

बिसासघाती अकिरतघन मै को न रखंदा ॥

सिमरि मुरीदा ढाढीआ सतिगुरु बखसंदा ॥

-- भाई गुरदास (वारं गिआन रतनावली, (36:21)

I am unfaithful and ungrateful. Who can save me, O Master! I pray to You as a pauper. You always forgive; forgive me also. I am accursed, a sinner, low and worthless; a thief, an adulterer, a gambler and one having an eye on the houses of others; a back-biter, evil-doer, indolent, a hypocrite and deceitful to all; one who indulges in lust, anger, drink, greed, attachment and egotism. One who is faithless and ungrateful, and trusted by none. I always pray to the Merciful Master.

The Master is our caste and honour. We have sold ourselves to Him. O Master! Whether good or bad we are now Master and disciples. Have mercy and save our honour. We bow at your feet without any pride. You are the pride of us humble ones. You are all-powerful.

हमरी जाति पाति गुरु सतिगुरु हम वेचिओ सिरु गुर के ॥

जन नानक नामु परिओ गुर चेला गुर राखहु लाज जन के ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 731)

Guru is our caste and honour. We have sold ourselves to Him. O Nanak! We are called Master and disciples. Save our honour.

We pray to the Perfect Master that He may unite us with the Lord who exists in the beginning, the middle and the end.

आदि मधि जो अंति निबाहै ॥ सो साजनु मेरा मनु चाहै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गडडी म० 5, पृ० 240)

He who is in the beginning, the middle and the end; for Him my mind yearns.

When one meets the Lord, true bliss is obtained, and for him the messengers of death cease to exist.

सतिगुर अगै अरदासि करि साजनु देइ मिलाइ ॥

साजनि मिलिए सुखु पाइआ जमदूत मुए बिखु खाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 55)

Offer your most sincere prayers to the True Guru, so that He may unite you with your Best Friend. Meeting your Best Friend, you shall find peace; the Messenger of Death shall take poison and die.

O Master! We live by seeing You. O Lord, hear my prayer, make me Your slave by giving me the gift of the Name, and take me under Your protection. O my Master and true friend! This is my prayer, that You who are all virtue, may never forget me.

दरसनु देखि जीवा गुर तेरा ॥ पूरन करमु होइ प्रभ मेरा ॥
 इह बेनंती सुणि प्रभ मेरे ॥ देहि नामु करि अपणे चरे ॥
 अपणी सरणि राखु प्रभ दाते ॥ गुर प्रसादि किनै विरलै जाते ॥
 सुनहु बिनउ प्रभ मेरे मीता ॥ चरण कमल वसहि मेरे चीता ॥
 नानकु एक करै अरदासि ॥ विसरु नाही पूरन गुणतासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 742)

O Master, I live by seeing You. My destiny is fulfilled. O Lord! Hear this prayer of mine. O provident Lord! Give me Your protection, and make me Your own. Never deprive me, O Master! of Your protection. O My Lord and friend, hear my prayer, let Your Lotus feet dwell in my heart. Nanak makes a prayer. O All-virtuous One, never forget me.

O dispeller of all fears, my Master! Nothing is hidden from You. You are merciful. Redeem us fools.

तुझ ते बाहरि किछु नही भव काटनहारे ॥
 कहु नानक सरणि दइआल गुर लेहु मुगध उधारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 809)

Nothing is beyond You, O dispeller of all fears; Nanak has taken refuge with the merciful Master; redeem the fool.

All the world is burning in the intense fire of attachment and Maya (delusion). In order to escape from it, it is necessary to take refuge with the Lord. We, therefore, pray to the Master that He in His mercy may save us from this burning fire and show us His compassion.

एहु जगु जलता देखि कै भजि पए हरि सरणार्इ राम ॥
 अरदासि करीं गुर पूरे आगै रखि लेवहु देहु वडाई राम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 3, पृ० 571)

On seeing the world in flames, we run for the shelter of the Lord. We pray to the Perfect Master for safety in the Name of the Lord.

What should we Ask of the Lord?

When a dutiful wife goes to her all-powerful Lord, full of hope, she surrenders her all to Him. Her clothes may be torn, but the Lord is pleased with her attitude. Can she then remain poor? No, never.

जिस की बसतु तिसु आगै राखै ॥ प्रभ की आगिआ मानै माथै ॥

उस ते चउगुन करै निहालु ॥ नानक साहिबु सदा दइआलु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 268)

Give to Him what is His, and accept the Will of the Lord; he is blessed fourfold; O Nanak, the Lord is always kind.

She asks the Lord for Himself above all. When the Lord comes, what else remains?

जा का मीतु साजनु है समीआ ॥ तिसु जन कउ कहु का की कमीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 186)

Those who have the Lord as Friend and Companion – tell me, what else would they need?

A king once went to a foreign country. Before he left, he asked his queens what they would like him to bring for them. One asked for clothes, another for delicious foods, yet another for useful articles, another for articles of beauty, and still others for diamonds and jewels. The youngest queen, who was generally considered a fool, but who in reality was the wisest of all, said, 'O Emperor! Come back yourself and keep me at your feet, and I will have everything I could wish for.' The king came back and sent the other queens the presents they had requested, and then went to the youngest queen with all he had. How fortunate was that queen! The king had the feeling that he should give all he possessed to her because she truly loved him. The queen sat at his feet, and touched the feet of her all-bountiful lord, and enjoyed his loving gaze. The other queens received a few gifts, but she had the love of her lord. Of what use were the gifts without the lord?

पाणी अंनु न भावै मरीऐ हावै बिनु पिर किउ सुखु पाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 3, पृ० 244)

She did not wish for either food or water, but sighed in separation; how could she feel at rest?

We, due to our short-sightedness, ask the Lord and the Master for various boons, and these may often increase our sufferings. Instead of asking for boons from the Bountiful Lord, ask for Himself. Then how can there be any lack of anything? To ask for boons is to display a feeling of inferiority

and a lack of respect. The queen knows that she is the consort of the king and will have palaces, servants, food, clothing and everything else she may want without asking for them. But if her Lord does not love her, then palaces, silken clothes and every other kind of fine possession would bring her no happiness.

धनी विहूणा पाट पटंबर भाही सेती जाले ॥

धूडी विचि लुडंदडी सोहां नानक तै सह नाले ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 5, पृ० 1425)

Burn the expensive articles of adornment; live in the dust, O Nanak, if He is with you.

If the lord is with the queen and these other things are also there, then it is pleasing to possess them. But one who is dyed in the colour of her lord, is glad to live without them, for the love of her lord is all-sufficing. Our primary needs are physical, and all the world is entangled in meeting these needs. The Lord looks after all. Every living being is provided for at birth. His fate is there before the formation of the body. The milk is there in the breast of the mother before a child is born. Our body takes shape according to our fate. All our suffering is due to short-sightedness.

प्रारब्ध पहिले बणी पाछे बणा सरीर ।

तुलसी इह असचरज है मन नहीं बांधे धीर ॥

-- तुलसी

Fate came into being first, and then the body; O Tulsi, it is strange that the mind is not at rest.

The body and its requirements are perishable. If you look around you carefully, you will find that nothing is eternal.

उपजै निपजै निपजि समाई ॥ नैनह देखत इहु जगु जाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी भगत कबीर, पृ० 325)

One is born and dies, and merges in non-existence; all this passes before the eyes of the universe. (Kabir)

Only the Lord and His Name (God in action) remain forever. All else is perishable. Ask the Lord for Himself and thirst for His sight.

निरगुनीआरे की बेनती देहु दरसु हरि राइओ ॥

नानक सरनि तुहारी ठाकुर सेवकु दुआरै आइओ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 241)

I am worthless – I offer this prayer, O my Lord King: "Please grant me the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan". Nanak has come to Your Sanctuary, O my Lord and Master, Your servant has come to Your Door.

Our original home is the Lord's home – Sach Khand (True Region). We have remained separated from the Lord for a long time. We do not remember for how long we have been wandering, but when we become tired of wandering, we should take refuge with the Lord and pray,

किरति करम के वीछुड़े किर किरपा मेलहु राम ॥

चारि कुंट दह दिस भ्रमे थकि आए प्रभ की साम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 133)

O Lord! have mercy on us and unite us with You. Our actions have led to our separation; have mercy, O Lord, and unite us with Yourself, we have come to seek refuge with You, O Lord, after becoming tired of wandering in all the four corners and ten directions of the world.

बहुत जनम बिछुरे थे माधउ इहु जनमु तुम्हारे लेखे ॥

कहि रविदास आस लिग जीवउ चिर भइओ दरसनु देखे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत रविदास, पृ० 694)

O Lord! For so many incarnations, I have been separated from You; I dedicate this life to You. Says Ravidas: placing my hope in You, I live. It is so long since I have gazed upon the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. (Ravidas)

Guru Amar Das Ji prays,

बहुते फेर पए किरपन कउ अब किछु किरपा कीजै ॥

होहु दइआल दरसनु देहु अपुना ऐसी बखस करीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 3, पृ० 666)

We are very much deluded, O Benign Lord, have mercy on us; be merciful and grant us the blessing of Your sight.

Guru Arjan Sahib directs us to pray,

अनिक जनम बहु जोनी भ्रमिआ बहुरि बहुरि दुखु पाइआ ॥

तुमरी कृपा ते मानुख देह पाई है देहु दरसु हरि राइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 207)

O Lord! We have been wandering in various bodies in various births and have had many sufferings. We now have a human body owing to Your mercy. Kindly show Yourself to us.

मेलि लैहु दइआल ढहि पर दुआरिआ ॥

रखि लेवहु दीन दइआल भ्रमत बहु हारिआ ॥

भगति वछलु तेरा बिरदु हरि पतित उधारिआ ॥

तुझ बिनु नाही कोइ बिनउ मोहि सारिआ ॥

करु गहि लेहु दइआल सागर संसारिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जैतसरी म० 5, पृ० 709)

O Lord! We are standing at Your door. Unite us with Yourself. O Saviour! Save us, for we are tired of wandering. O Lord! You are kind to the devotees. You are the redeemer of sinners. There is no one besides You. I cry to You for help in all humility and helplessness. O Gracious Lord! This universe is a dangerous ocean. Take me across by holding my hand.

सभे कतै रतीआ मै दोहागणि कितु ॥

मै तनि अवगण एतड़े खसमु न फेरे चितु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 1, पृ० 790)

The other brides are making merry; I am the unfortunate one. I am full of sins, and the Lord pays no attention to me.

करमहीण धन करै बिनंती कदि नानक आवै वारी ॥

सभि सुहागणि माणहि रलीआ इक देवहु राति मुरारी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 5, पृ० 959)

Nanak, the unfortunate one prays for her turn. All the blessed soul-brides celebrate and make merry; bless me as well with a night of bliss, O Lord.

सभि सहीआ सहु रावणि गईआ हउ दाधी कै दरि जावा ॥

अमाली हउ खरी सुचजी तै सह एकि न भावा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 1, पृ० 558)

All my friends have gone to please their Lord; but where can I, the wretched one go? O my friend, I am beautiful, but the Lord does not love me.

करवतु भला न करवट तेरी ॥ लागु गले सुनु बिनती मेरी ॥

हउ वारी मुखु फेरि पिआरे ॥ करवटु दे मो कउ काहे कउ मारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा भगत कबीर, पृ० 484)

Death is preferable to Your indifference; hear me and hold me close. O look at me, my Beloved, why torment me by turning away from me. (Kabir)

दरसन की पिआस घणी चितवत अनिक प्रकार ॥

करहु अनुग्रहु पारब्रह्म हरि किरपा धारि मुरारि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसावरी म० 5, पृ० 431)

I am thirsty for a sight of You, and I am tortured with anxiety; O Transcendental Lord, have mercy on me.

जीवनु तउ गनीऐ हरि पेखा ॥

करहु कृपा प्रीतम मनमोहन फोरि भरम की रेखा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग म० 5, पृ० 1221)

Life is fruitful if the Lord is seen; O dearest Beloved, have mercy and remove my delusion.

करउ बेनती अति घनी इहु जीउ होमागउ ॥

अरथ आन सभि वारिआ प्रिअ निमख सोहागउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 808)

I pray most earnestly and I would sacrifice my life; wealth and honour would I forego for even a moment of union.

किआ मागउ किआ कहि सुणी मै दरसन भूख पिआसि जीउ ॥

गुर सबदी सहु पाइआ सचु नानक की अरदासि जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 1, पृ० 762)

What should I ask for or say? I am hungry and thirsty to see You O Nanak! He can be known by the Word of the Master.

O Thou Eternal Great One! You are the faultless sustainer. I pray to You. Man lives in ignorance and does not remember the Lord, and in this way, wastes his life. Your creature always forgets. You, however, keep the honour of Your innate nature. O Helper of the worthless! How can I recite your virtues? What wisdom can an ignorant slave possess? This life and body are Your gifts. As we have taken refuge with You, You have saved us from the great fire of this world, by taking us out of it. We rely and lean in confidence on You, and have given up all other hopes. You are unknowable and limitless and unutterable. You cannot be described in words. O Lord! I have taken refuge with You, and You can protect me. I surrender my life and body to You. This is all Your kindness; otherwise who would know me? Whatever I have to say, I say to You. To whom else can I pray? O Lord! You will not find anyone more helpless than I, and none is more

merciful than Yourself. We profess to be Yours, but are so in name only. Make us perfect.

यक अरज गुफतम पेसि तो दर गोस कुन करतार ॥

हका कबीर करीम तू बेऐब परवदगार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तिलंग म० 1, पृ० 721)

O Creator, pray hear my prayer, You are the great Merciful Sustainer.

रहिओ अचेतु न चेतिओ गोबिंद बिरथा अउध सिरानी ॥

कहु नानक हरि बिरदु पछानउ भूले सदा परानी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 9, पृ० 633)

I remained ignorant and did not remember the Lord, and so wasted my life. O Nanak! He keeps the honour of His innate nature, though we always forget Him.

किआ गुण तेरे सारि सम्हाली मोहि निरगुन के दातारे ॥

बै खरीदु किआ करे चतुराई इहु जीउ पिंडु सभु थारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 738)

O Forgiver of the worthless, how can I sing Your virtues? What wisdom can this ignorant slave display? This life and body are Yours.

महा अग्नि ते तुधु हाथ दे राखे पए तेरी सरणार्ई ॥

तेरा माणु ताणु रिद अंतरि होर दूजी आस चुकाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 748)

You saved us who took refuge with You by taking us out of the great fire. We have reliance and confidence in our hearts in You, and have no other hope.

ऊचा अगम अपार प्रभु कथनु न जाइ अकथु ॥

नानक प्रभ सरणागती राखन कउ समरथु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जैतसरी म० 5, पृ० 704)

He is the great unknowable, limitless Lord. He cannot be described in words. Nanak seeks the Sanctuary of the all-powerful God, to save us.

तुधु आगै अरदासि हमारी जीउ पिंडु सभु तेरा ॥

कहु नानक सभ तेरी वडिआई कोई नाउ न जाणै मेरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 383)

I pray to Thee, all my body and soul are Yours. Glory be to the Lord. O Nanak, nobody else knows my name.

जो किछु करणा सु तेरै पासि ॥ किसु आगै कीचै अरदासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 1, पृ० 1125)

Whatever I have to do is according to Your Will; to whom else should I pray.

हम सरि दीनु दइआलु न तुम सरि अब पतीआरु किआ कीजै ॥

बचनी तोर मोर मनु मानै जन कउ पूरनु दीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धन्यासरी भगत रविदास, पृ० 694)

O Merciful Lord! You are our protector. There is no one else like You. How can we go anywhere else? I have confidence in Your words; fulfil them, I pray. (Ravidas)

मै ताणु दीबाणु तूहै मेरे सुआमी मै तुधु आगै अरदासि ॥

मै होरु थाउ नाही जिंसु पहि करउ बेनंती मेरा दुखु सुखु तुझ ही पासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 735)

I have become crazy. O my Lord and Master; unto You alone I pray. There is no other place to offer my prayer; I can entrust my pains and pleasures only with You.

हरि की वडिआई हउ आखि न साका हउ मूरखु मुगधु नीचाणु ॥

जन नानक कउ हरि बखसि लै मेरे सुआमी सरणागति पइआ अजाणु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 736)

The greatness of the Lord cannot be described. I am foolish, worldly and lowly; please, forgive servant Nanak, O my Lord and Master, I am ignorant, but I have entered Your Sanctuary.

हम मूरख मुगध अगिआन मती सरणागति पुरख अजनमा ॥

करि किरपा रखि लेवहु मेरे ठाकुर हम पाथर हीन अकरमा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 799)

We are foolish, worldly and ignorant, and take shelter with You, the Unborn One; have compassion and save us, O Lord; we, like the stones, have no merit.

हरि दइआ प्रभ धारहु पाखण हम तारहु कढि लेवहु सबदि सुभाइ जीउ ॥

मोह चीकड़ि फाथे निघरत हम जाते हरि बांह प्रभू पकराइ जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 446)

O Lord! Be merciful and redeem us; help the soul by means of the Shabd. We are sunk in the quagmire of attachment; O Lord, give us Your hand to hold.

किरपा करहु दीन के दाते मेरा गुणु अवगणु न बीचारहु कोई ॥

माटी का किआ धोपै सुआमी माणस की गति एही ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 882)

Have mercy on me, a helpless one, O Bountiful Lord. Do not judge my merits and demerits. How can clay be washed clean? Such is the state of humankind.

दइआ मइआ करि प्रानपति मोरे मोहि अनाथ सरणि प्रभ तोरी ॥

अंध कूप महि हाथ दे राखहु कछू सिआनप उकति न मोरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 208)

O Lord of my life! I am an orphan and have taken shelter with You. Have mercy and compassion on me. In this deep well of attachment and delusion, my reason can do nothing.

हम अपराध पाप बहु कीने करि दुसटी चोर चुराइआ ॥

अब नानक सरणागति आए हरि राखहु लाज हरि भाइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पुरखी म० 4, पृ० 172)

We have committed many faults and sins. We are evil-doers and thieves, and have committed many thefts. Nanak has taken shelter with You. O Lord! Be merciful and save his honour.

राखणहारा अगम अपारा सुणि बेनंती मेरीआ ॥

नानक मूरखु कबहि न चेतै किआ सूझै रैणि अंधेरीआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (तुखारी म० 1, पृ० 1110)

O Saviour, Inaccessible and Infinite Lord, please listen to my prayer. Nanak, the fool, never remembers Him; what can he see in the dark of night?

I am without beauty or reasoning power. I am separated from my home and have come to take shelter with You after a very long time. I have no money and no longer have the attraction of youth. I am an orphan. Protect me.

रूप हीन बुधि बल हीनी मोहि परदेसनि दूर ते आई ॥

नाहिन दरबु न जोबन माती मोहि अनाथ की करहु समाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पुरखी म० 5, पृ० 204)

I am without beauty or intellect, and come from a distant foreign land; I have no wealth or youthful attraction. I am an orphan, please, unite me with Yourself.

लेखै कतहि न छूटीऐ खिनु खिनु भूलनहार ॥

बखसनहार बखसि लै नानक पारि उत्तार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 261)

I commit faults every moment. I cannot get free of this world because of my actions. You are the forgiver. Forgive me, and take me across this Ocean.

We have committed as many sins as there are drops of water in the ocean. We are stones, and will be drowned. Have mercy and compassion, and save us from drowning.

असी खते बहुतु कमावदे अंतु न पारावारु ॥

हरि किरपा करि कै बखसि लैहु हउ पापी वड गुनहगारु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 3, पृ० 1416)

We commit mistakes which are innumerable; O Lord! forgive me, I am a great sinner and a great offender.

जेता समुंदु सागरु नीरि भरिआ तेते अउगण हमारे ॥

दइआ करहु किछु मिहर उपावहु डुबदे पथर तारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी चेती म० 1, पृ० 156)

Like the drops of water in the ocean, there is no count of my sins. Have mercy and compassion, and save me from drowning like a stone – please carry me across!

जगतु जलंदा रखि लै आपणी किरपा धारि ॥

जितु दुआरै उबरै तितै लैहु उबारि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल की वार म० 3, पृ० 853)

The world is burning; save it through Your mercy, save it by the methods, by which it can be saved.

तू अथाहु अपारु अति ऊचा कोई अवरु न तेरी भाते ॥

इह अरदासि हमारी सुआमी विसरु नाही सुखदाते ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 747)

You are unfathomable and limitless, O most High. None is like you; this is our prayer, O Lord! that we may not forget You, O Peace-giving Lord.

तुम हरि दाते समरथ सुआमी इकु मागउ तुझ पासहु हरि दानै ॥

जन नानक कउ हरि कृपा करि दीजै सद बसहि रिदै मोहि हरि चरानै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कलिआन म० 4, पृ० 1320)

O all-powerful provident Lord! I ask one boon of Thee; have mercy on Nanak, and that Your Feet may abide forever within my heart.

मति सुमति तेरै वसि सुआमी हम जंत तू पुरखु जंतैनी ॥

जन नानक के प्रभ करते सुआमी जिउ भावै तिवै बुलैनी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 800)

Wisdom, balanced wisdom is in Your power, O Lord and Master; I am the instrument, and You are the player, O Primal Lord.

O God, O Creator, Lord and Master of servant Nanak, as You wish, so do I speak.

किआ कोई तेरी सेवा करे किआ को करे अभिमाना ॥

जब अपुनी जोति खिंचिह तू सुआमी तब कोई करउ दिखा वखिआना ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विलावल म० 3, पृ० 797)

How can anyone serve You or be proud of such service? If You withdraw Your Light, how can one discourse on You?

विणु तुधु होरु जि मंगणा सिरि दुखा कै दुख ॥

देहि नामु संतोखीआ उतरै मन की भुख ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 5, पृ० 958)

To ask for any other than You, Lord, is the most miserable of miseries. Please bless with Your Name, and make me content; may the hunger of my mind be satisfied.

A Muslim Saint has also said that we should ask the Lord for Himself alone and nothing else, since all else is perishable.

अज़ खुदा जुज़ खुदा न बायद ख्वास्त,

आंकिह जुज़ अस्त रु ब-फनास्त ।

अज़ खुदा आं चीज़ मख्वाह किह,

रुए ऊ बतरफ़ ज़वाल बाशद ।

दिल मकुन अज़ फ़िक्रे-बातिलहा सियाह,

अज़ खुदा गैर अज़ खुदा दीगर मख्वाह ।

-- मसनवी बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (पृ० 37)

From God nothing but God should be asked; all else but Him is perishable. From God ask not for things which are going to perish; from God ask for nothing but Himself. Do not blacken your heart with false thoughts. (Bu-Ali Shah Qalandar)

Ask the Master for the Lord

The Lord dwells in the Master. He dwells in Him in the form of the Sound Current. The Master is a God-man. Pray to the Lord, 'O Saviour! You are merciful and compassionate. Be kind and lead us to a Master who will sustain our spirit, and through whom we may find You.'

तुम दइआल सरब दुख भंजन इक बिनउ सुनहु दे काने ॥

जिस ते तुम हरि जाने सुआमी सो सतिगुरु मेलि मेरा प्राने ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पूरबी म० 4, पृ० 169)

You are merciful and compassionate; hear my prayer with Thy ever-attentive ear; connect my soul to the Master who has realized You, O Lord.

हरि हरि कृपा करहु जगजीवन मै सरधा नामि लगावैगो ॥

नानक गुरु गुरु है सतिगुरु मै सतिगुरु सरनि मिलावैगो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कानड़ा म० 4, पृ० 1310)

O Lord, Har, Har, please grant Your Grace. O Life of the World, instill faith in Naam within me. Nanak is the Guru, the Guru, the True Guru. I am immersed in the Sanctury of the True Guru.

ते साधू हरि मेलहु सुआमी जिन जपिआ गति होइ हमारी ॥

तिन का दरसु देखि मनु बिगसै खिनु खिनु तिन कउ हउ बिलहारी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों म० 4, पृ० 1135)

O Lord! Lead us to a Master, by remembering whom, we may obtain salvation. Gazing upon the Blessed Vision of His Darshan, my mind may blossom forth. Each and every moment, I am a sacrifice to Him.

We should pray to the Lord and the Master to give us the opportunity to see them, to seek refuge with them, to get from them the Name, to have their help in escaping from the snares of the sense pleasures, and to aid us in crossing the ocean of the world. They are all-powerful and can grant us anything they wish.

In addition, the devotee should ask them that he may live as they wish him to. We are without virtues, unwise, uninformed and ignorant. We do not know what to do. O Lord! Have mercy, make us sing Your praises so that we may live according to Your Will.

निरगुण मुगधु अजाणु अगिआनी करम धरम नही जाणा ॥

दइआ करहु नानक गुण गावै मिठा लगै तेरा भाणा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 748)

I am worthless, foolish, thoughtless and ignorant. I know nothing about good actions and righteous living. Take pity on Nanak, O Lord! that he may sing Your Praises; and that Your Will may seem sweet to him.

In addition to this, we should also pray that we may remember Him and be devoted to Him.

जपि जपि तुधु निरंकार भरमु भउ खोवणा ॥
जो तेरै रंगि रते से जोनि न जोवणा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी की वार म० 5, पृ० 523)

*He who remembers the Formless One, his delusion disappears.
He who is dyed in Your hue is freed from transmigration.*

फिरत फिरत प्रभ आइआ परिआ तउ सरनाइ ॥
नानक की प्रभ बेनती अपनी भगती लाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 289)

*O Lord! After wandering for many ages, I have taken refuge with
You. O Lord! Listen to Nanak and give him Your devotion.*

Also pray to hear the Sound or Shabd, the Lord's Nectar
and Name, for they are the principal means of reaching the
Lord.

हम जाचिक दीन प्रभ तेरिआ मुखि दीजै अमृत बाणी ॥
सतिगुरु मेरा मित्रु प्रभ हरि मेलहु सुघड़ सुजाणी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 4, पृ० 997)

*We are Your humble devotees; give us the Nectar of the Name, O
Beloved Master! Unite me to the all-wise Lord.*

निरगुणीआरे कउ बखसि लै सुआमी आपे लैहु मिलाई ॥
तू बिअंतु तेरा अंतु न पाइआ सबदे देहु बुझाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती म० 3, पृ० 1333)

*Forgive the sinner, O Lord, and unite him to You; You are
limitless; no one can discuss Your limits. You are known through
the Shabd within the body.*

गुण निधान मेरा प्रभु करता उसतति कउनु करीजै राम ॥
संता की बेनंती सुआमी नामु महा रसु दीजै राम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 784)

*O virtuous Lord and Creator! How can I praise you? Hear the
prayers of the devotees and give the Nectar of the Name.*

हम भीखक भेखारी तेरे तू निज पति है दाता ॥
होहु दैआल नामु देहु मंगत जन कउ सदा रहउ रंगि राता ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 3, पृ० 666)

*We are beggars at Your door, O bountiful One; be pleased to give
the Name which will give us bliss.*

हा हा प्रभ राखि लेहु ॥

हम ते किछू न होइ मेरे स्वामी करि किरपा अपुना नामु देहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी म० 5, पृ० 675)

O Lord! Save us, we pray. We can do nothing of ourselves. Have mercy and give us Your Name.

In this Kali Yuga (Iron Age) singing the praises of the Shabd is very beneficial.

कलि कीरति सबदु पछानु ॥ एहा भगति चूकै अभिमानु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 424)

In Kali Yuga sing the Shabd; by this devotion, pride is removed.

By singing the Name, the soul gains strength and pride disappears. One should, therefore, mentally pray for His remembrance and meditate on Him.

मन महि चितवउ चितवनी उदमु करउ उठि नीत ॥

हरि कीरतन का आहरो हरि देहु नानक के मीत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गूजरी म० 5, पृ० 519)

I wish to make an effort every morning that I may enjoy the ambrosia of singing the praises of the Lord. O Lord, bestow this boon on Nanak.

Praying that one may dwell at the feet of the Master and may get the dust of His holy feet (His spiritual love and power) is also enjoined by the Saints.

मिलु साधसंगे नाम रंगे तहा पूरन आसो ॥

बिनवति नानक धारि किरपा हरि चरण कमल निवासो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विहागड़ा म० 5, पृ० 545)

May I get the company of the Master, and be dyed in love of the Name. O Lord, have mercy on Nanak and let Thy feet dwell in his heart.

करि किरपा प्रभ दीन दइआला ॥ नानक दीजै साध रवाला ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 194)

Have compassion, O Merciful Lord; give to Nanak the company of Saints.

रामा हम दासन दास करीजै ॥

जब लगि सासु होइ मन अंतरि साधू धूरि पिवीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कलिआन म० 4, पृ० 1326)

O Lord, accept us as slave of Your slaves. Give us the dust of the feet of the Saints as long as we live.

The Gurus give examples of prayers for removing dangers to the devotees, and prayers for fulfilling their needs

are also given. They are referred to here, so that the reader can derive benefit by reading them.

Examples of Prayers

Man has a body and a soul. The soul is as valuable in the body as is a beautiful pearl in a shell. Saints recommend prayers of several kinds. There are some who ask the Lord for the necessities of life, so that after satisfying these needs, they may give devotion to the Lord. The words 'Give us this day our daily bread' occur in the Lord's Prayer.

Saints consider that everything belongs to the Lord and pray for daily necessities, so that after satisfying the needs of the body full devotion may be given to the Lord. The needs of the body of this body should be satisfied first, and the needs of the soul should be looked after thereafter. Kabir Sahib says that hunger interferes with one's prayers. Therefore one should satisfy one's hunger with a crust of bread and then engage in prayer.

कबीर छुधा है कूकरी, करत भजन में भंग ।

या को टुकड़ा डारि करि, सुमिरन करो निसंक ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (सुमिरन का अंग 31, पृ० 96)

O Kabir, hunger interferes with prayer; first take a crust of bread, and then engage in remembrance.

The Master says that it is proper for a devotee to ask for his needs in the beginning. Kabir prayed,

O Lord! I cannot pray while hungry. I therefore ask for two pounds of flour every day.

He also prayed for half-a-pound of pulse, so as to provide for both of his daily meals. He also made a request for a cot, a pillow, a bedding and a quilt, so that he could be free to engage, in devotion. But he did not ask for these out of greed, for he loved the Name Only.

भूखे भगति न कीजै ॥ यह माला अपनी लीजै ॥

हउ मांगउ संतन रेना ॥ मै नाही किसी का देना ॥

माधो कैसी बनै तुम संगे ॥ आपि न देहु त लेवउ मंगे ॥

दुइ सेर मांगउ चूना ॥ पाउ घीउ संगि लूना ॥

अध सेरु मांगउ दाले ॥ मो कउ दोनउ वखत जिवाले ॥

खाट मांगउ चउपाई ॥ सिरहाना अवर तुलाई ॥
 ऊपर कउ मांगउ खींधा ॥ तेरी भगति करै जनु थींधा ॥
 मै नाही कीता लबो ॥ इकु नाउ तेरा मै फबो ॥
 कहि कबीर मनु मानिआ ॥ मनु मानिआ तउ हरि जानिआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ भगत कबीर, पृ० 656)

I cannot engage in devotion while hungry, O Lord. Please take back your rosary.

I beg for the dust of the feet of the Saints. I do not owe anyone anything.

O Lord, how can I can with You? If you do not give me Yourself, then I shall ask until I get You.

Pray give me two pounds of flour, and a little butter and salt.

I ask for half-a-pound of pulse, so that I may have both of my daily meals.

Give me a cot, a pillow and also a quilt to cover myself, so that I may be free to remember You.

I am not avaricious; I love Your Name alone.

Says Kabir, my mind is pleased and appeased. Now that my mind is pleased and appeased, I have come to know the Lord. (Kabir)

Dhanna Bhagat similarly prays, O Lord! I adore You. You do all the work of Your devotees. I ask for pulse, flour and butter, so that I may be happy after taking them. I also ask for good clothes and shoes, as well as cereals. I also wish for a milk-giving cow and a buffalo. There should be a good mare to ride, and an obedient and sympathetic wife.

गोपाल तेरा आरता ॥

जो जन तुमरी भगति करते तिन के काज सवारता ॥

दालि सीधा मागउ घीउ ॥ हमरा खुसी करै नित जीउ ॥

पन्हीआ छादनु नीका ॥ अनाजु मगउ सत सी का ॥

गऊ भैस मगउ लावेरी ॥ इक ताजनि तुरी चंगेरी ॥

घर की गीहनि चंगी ॥ जनु धना लेवै मंगी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (धनासरी भगत धन्ना, पृ० 695)

O Lord! I adore Thee.

You see to it that all the actions of Your devotees are successful.

Give pulses, salt and butter, so that I may be happy every day.

Give good shoes to wear, and seven kinds of cereals;

a cow and a buffalo to give milk, and a mare to ride.

Dhanna also asks for a good wife. Your humble servant Dhanna begs for these things, Lord.

Saints and Adepts, while knowing fully well that the Lord knows one's needs, have given us some examples of prayers so that we may act in accordance with them.

The Tenth Guru. Gobind Singh prayed for Grace for His family and His disciples. He prayed,

कळ्यो बाव बैनती॥

हमरी करो हाथि दे रक्खा। पूरन होइ चित की इच्छा॥
 तव चरनन मन रहै हमारा। अपना जान करो प्रतिपारा॥
 हमरे दुसट सभै तुम घावहु। आपु हाथ दै मोहि बचावहु॥
 सुखी बसै मोरो परिवारा। सेवक सिख्य सभै करतारा॥
 मो रक्खा निज्ज कर दै करियै। सभ बैरन कौ आज संघरियै॥
 पूरन होइ हमारी आसा। तोरि भजन की रहै पयासा॥
 तुमह छाडि कोयी अवर न धियाऊं। जो बर चाहौं सु तुम ते पाऊं॥
 सेवक सिख्य हमारे तारियहि। चुन चुन सत्रु हमारे मारियहि॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (वौपाई 377-380)

How should I pray?

Protect me, O Lord with Your Hands; may all my heart's desires be fulfilled.

May my mind focus on Your Feet; sustain me, as your own.

O Lord, Destroy all my enemies and guard me with Your Hands.

O, Creator, May my family live in comfort along with all devotees and disciples.

Always shelter and protect me, O Lord and gather this day all my enemies;

May all my aspirations be fulfilled; let my thirst for Your Name remain perpetual.

May I focus on none else except You; and whatever I desire, be obtained from You;

Let my devotees and disciples cross the world-ocean; all my vices be singled out and destroyed. (Sridasam.org p.1386)

The Lord's Prayer:

Jesus Christ prayed,

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive as our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. (Lord's Prayer)

The followers of Mahatma Buddha do not believe in prayers, but if their religion is examined closely, it will be found that they have also accepted the reality behind prayer. When they sit after bathing and cleaning themselves in the morning and evening, they send out good wishes of the following kind: 'I wish the good of all the universe. May all living beings, whether below or above, whether on the left or the right, prosper. May all living beings in heaven, earth, the nether worlds and hell, have peace and goodwill.' They do not ask for anything but simply send out their good wishes for the good and welfare of the entire universe, and the good of all is wished for. Real prayer, consists in wishing for the good of all.

Prayers of Hindus:

There are prayers in the Vedas which ask for physical and daily necessities. One of these is:

वयमु त्वा पथस्पते रथं न वाजसातये ॥ धिये पूषन्नयुज्महि ॥
अभि नो नर्यं वसु प्रयतदक्षिणम् ॥ वामं गृहपतिं नय ॥
अदित्सन्तं विदाघृणे पूषन्दानाय चोदय ॥ पणेश्चिद्धि म्रदा मनः ॥
वि पथो वाजसातये चिनुहि वि मृधो जहि ॥ साधन्तामुग्र नो धियः ॥
परितुन्धि पणीनामारया हृदया कवे ॥ अथेमस्मभ्यं रन्धय ॥

-- ऋग्वेद (6:5:53:1-5)

O Sustainer, Lord of the paths, we have yoked Thee to our chariot through our prayers so that we may attain success and salvation. Bestow upon us that wealth that men yearn for. Grant us the company of the courageous, the philanthropic and the compassionate Giver of food. O powerful Deity, throw open the path that we may obtain food, that we may destroy our foes, that we may fulfil our desires. O Wise Deity, pierce the hearts of the avaricious with Your armour and make them subject to us. (Rg Veda)

In their daily ritual, the Hindus pray as follows:

ओं तच्चक्षुर्देववहितं पुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् ।

पश्येम शरदः शतं जीवेम शरदः शतं शृणुयाम शरदः शतं प्र ब्रवाम

शरदः शतमदीनाः स्याम

शरदः शतं भूयश्च शरदः शतात् ।।

-- यजुर्वेद (36:24)

Brahm (the Lord), who is the eye of the entire universe and the well-wisher of all, and who is pure and free from worldly blemish, is before us. May we see Him (His Light) for a hundred years. May we live for Him a hundred years. may we hear Him (the Shabd) for a hundred years. May we sing His glories and through His Mercy be free a hundred years, and may this state last for over a hundred years.(Yajur Veda 36:24)

The Gayatri Mantra is nothing but a prayer.

ओं भूर्भुवः सुवः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।।

परो रजसे सावदोम् ।।

-- ऋग्वेद (3:62:10)

The god who is the manifestation of the Divine, may he illumine our minds.

The mantra ends with (paro rajase), pure consciousness (which is not inert) at 'the end of silence'.

In the Vedanta, prayer consists in hearing and meditating and contemplating on the great saying (Maha Vakya महावाक्य). These are four in number:

1. प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म

-- ऋग्वेद, ऐतरेय उपनिषद~ (3:3)

'Insight is Brahman,' or 'Brahman is insight.'

2. अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म

-- अथर्ववेद, माण्डूक्य उपनिषद~ (1:2)

'This Self (Atman) is Brahman.'

3. तत् त्वम् असि

-- सामवेद, छान्दोग्य उपनिषद~ (6:8:7)

'That essence (tat, referring to sat), the Existent are you.'

4. अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि

-- यजुर्वेद, ब्रह्दारण्यक उपनिषद~ (1:4:10)

'I am Brahman.'

They all express the insight that the individual self (jiva) which appears as a separate existence, is in essence (atman) part and manifestation of the whole (Brahman).

Similarly, the Jains also pray. In all these prayers we are reminded of the ideal and of our ultimate destination, which is to realize the Lord.

Prayers of Muslims:

God is one. God is detached from all. He gave birth to none. Of none is He born. He has no equal. Show us the right path.

Hafiz Sahib prays to his Master in the ecstasy of his devotion:

मनम गरीबे—दयार ओ तुई गरीब नवाज़,
दमे बहाले—गरीबे—दयार खुद परवाज़।
गरज़ करिश्माए—हुस्न अस्त वरना हाजत नीस्त,
जमाले—दौलते—महमूद रा ब जुल्फ़े—अयाज़।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 236)

O Master, I am poor while You are the helper of the poor. I have been separated from the Original Home for a very long time. Have pity on my condition and take me back to the Original Home. Your intention was to show the miracle of Thy wonderful beauty; otherwise, in all his glory and wealth, what need had Sultan Mahmud for the tresses of (his slave) Aiyaz?

O Master! I am poor, and You are the helper. I have been separated from my Original Home for many ages. Have mercy and take me with You to the Original Home. I am drawn to You because of Your incomparable beauty; without You I am nothing. This is the reason why Sultan Mahmud was so kind to his slave (Aiyaz).

Hafiz further says,

मा रा बर आस्ताने—तू बस हक्के—ख़िदमत अस्त,
ऐ ख़्वाजा बाज़ बी बतरहम्म गुलाम रा।।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 38)

I have only the desire to serve at Your door; O Lord, have mercy on Your slave, and give him a kindly glance.

Maulana Rumi prays to the Master:

साकी तू शराबे—लामकां रा, आं नामो—निशाने—बेनिशां रा।
यक बार दिगर चिह्न करदी ऐ जान, साकी करदी तू साकीयां रा।

बर बंद दो चश्मे—ऐब बीं रा, बकुशाए दो चश्मे—गैब दां रा ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज (पृ० 19)

O Master, by bestowing the wine of homelessness which leads to the indescribable, You have turned the travellers into Wine servers, (transformed them into adepts). Close my fault-finding eyes and give the Inner Eyes which can see the Reality.

He again says,

काफ़ तुई मस्किने—सीमूर्ग रा, शमअ तुई जान चू परवाना रा ।

चश्माए—हैवां बकुशा हर तरफ़, नकल कुन ई किस्सा—ओ—अफ़साना रा ।

मस्त कुन ऐ साकी ओ दरकार कश, ई ख़िरद काफ़िरे—बेगाना रा ।

यक दमे दर मस्जिदे—मा अंदर आ, दर सुखन आरास्ता ई खाना रा ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज (पृ० 23)

O Lord and Master! Just as Mount Caucasus is the home of the king eagle, You are the resting place of the bird of my soul. Were I a moth, You would be the candle in the flame of which I would sacrifice myself. O Merciful One, shower Thy Elixir all round about me, so that the stories about the Pool of Nectar, the Rain or the Water of Life, and the Fountain of Life-giving Water may come true. Give me the intoxication of love, and bridle the unruly intellect in the service of the Lord. My last prayer is that You should appear in the mosque of my body, so that my humble abodemay feel honoured and become pure.

Prayers of Kabir:

बिनवत हौं कर जोरि कै, सुनिये कृपा—निधान ।

साध संगति सुख दीजिये, दया गरीबी दान ।।

I pray with folded hands, listen to me, O Merciful Master. Give me peace and the company of Saints; also humility, poverty and knowledge.

जो अब के सतगुरु मिलैं, सब दुख आखौं रोय ।

चरनों ऊपर सीस धरि,, कहौं जो कहना होय ।।

Kabir makes this prayer while thinking of your holy feet. Show me the true path of the Saints, O Master.

क्या मुख लै बिनती करौं, लाज आवत है मोहिं ।

तुम देखत औगुन करौं, कस भावौं तोहिं ।।

How can I utter a word of prayer? I am ashamed of myself. I sin before your very eyes. How can I please you?

कर जोरे बिनती करौं, भवसागर अपार ।

बंदा ऊपर मिहर करि, आवागवन निवार ॥

I pray to You with folded hands. The Worldly Ocean is immense. Do have mercy over this slave and end the process of Coming and Going.

साहिब तुम जनि बीसरो, लाख लोग लग लगि जाहिं ।

हमसे तुमरे बहुत हैं, तुम सम हमरे नाहिं ॥

Even if I forget You, pray, forget me not. O Lord, forget me not, though You can have thousands of others. You can get many like me; but I cannot get any other like You.

सतगुरु तोहि बिसारि कै, का के सरनि जायँ ।

सिव विरंचि मुनि नारदा, हिरदे नाहिं समायँ ॥

How can I forget You? I have nowhere else to go. My mind cares not for Shiva or Muni Narad.

जो मैं भूल बिगाड़िया, ना करु मैला चित्त ।

साहिब गरुआ लोड़िये, नफर बिगाड़ै नित्त ॥

If I forget You by mistake, pray, do not take it to heart. The Master should love the poor. A man errs daily.

मेरा मुझ में कछु नहीं, जो कछु है सो तुज्झ ।

तेरा तुझ को सौंपते, का लागत है मुज्झ ॥

I possess nothing. Whatever is with me is Yours. What then matters for me to hand over whatever is Yours to You.

सुरति करौ मेरे साइयाँ, हम हैं भवजल माहिं ।

आपे ही बहि जायँगे, जो नहिं पकरौ बाहिं ॥

We are helplessly floating in the worldly ocean. If you do not grasp us by the arms, we shall drown in it.

औगुन किये तो बहु किये, करत न मानी हार ।

भावै बंदा बकसिये, भवै गरदन मार ॥

Sins I have committed many within no time at all. And You may pardon me or punish me as You like.

अवगुन मेरे बाप जी, बकस गरीब निवाज ।

जो मैं नूत कपूत हौं, तऊ पिता को लाज ॥

O forgive me, pardon me, spare me, O helper of the poor. I am an undutiful son, but my father is jealous of my honour.

साईं केरा बहुत गुन, औगन कोई नाहिं ।

जो दिल खोजौ आपना, सब औगुन मुझ माहिं ॥

O Lord, You are full of virtues and have no faults. When I searched my heart, I found there every fault.

साईं तेरा कछु नहीं, मेरा होय अकाज ।

बिरद तुम्हारे नाम की, सरन परे की लाज ।।

O Lord, what is it to you, but for me it is disaster. By the Grace of Your Name I will have a place of honour.

साहिब तुमहिं दयाल हौ, तुम लागि मेरी दौर ।

जैसे काग जहाज को, सूझै ओर न ठौर ।।

Lord, You are merciful, I run towards You alone. The crow has nowhere to rest, but on the ship.

मैं अपराधी जनम का, नख सिख भरा बिकार ।

तुम दाता दुख-भंजना, मेरी करो सम्हार ।।

I am a born sinner, full of all defects. I am a sinful soul, O Lord; pray, save me. You, the bountiful remover of sufferings, pray, look after me.

अंतरजामी एक तुम, आत्म के आधार ।

जो तुम छोड़ौ हाथ तें, कौन उतारै पार ।।

Help me, O Lord, I am in deep waters. By myself I would be carried away; hold me by the hand.

मन परतीत न प्रेम रस, ना कछु तन में ढंग ।

ना जानौं उस पीव से, क्योंकर रहसी रंग ।।

I believe I have no love in my mind, and I do not have a beautiful body. I do not know how I could survive without the Lord.

मेरे सतगुरु मिलेंगे, पूछेंगे कुसलात ।

आदि अंत की सब कहौं, उर अंतर की बात ।।

If I meet the Lord in this life, I will tell Him all my troubles while I weep. I will place my head on His feet, and say what I have to say.

तुम तो समरथ साइयाँ, दृढ़ कर पकरो बाहिं ।

धुरही लै पहुँचाइसे, जनि छाड़ो मग माहिं ।।

You know the inner thoughts of all, and are the support of the universe. If You let go my hand, who would take me across?

भवसागर भारी महा, गहिरा अगम अगाह ।

तुम दयाल दाया करो, तब पाओं कछु थाह ।।

The ocean of the universe is very deep, unknowable and unfathomable. O Merciful Lord, if You have compassion, can I feel its depth?

औगुनहारा गुन नहीं, मन का बड़ा कठोर।

ऐसे समरथ सतगुरु, ताहि लगावैं ठौर॥

I am a great sinner, and am very hard of heart. O powerful Master, You alone can take me to my resting place.

कबीर करत है बीनती, सुनो संत चित लाय।

मारग सिरजनहार का, दीजै मोहिं बताय॥

You are all-powerful, my Lord, pray hold me firmly by the arm. Take me to my destination, and leave me not by the wayside.

भक्ति दान मोहिं दीजिये, गुरु देवन के देव।

और नहीं कछु चाहिये, निसु दिन तेरी सेव॥

Give me the boon of devotion, O Master and God of gods, I wish for nothing else except Thy daily service.

सतगुरु बड़े दयाल हैं, संतन के आधार।

भवसागरहि अथाह से, खेड़ उतारैं पार॥

I am drowning in the middle of the stream; hold me and take me across.

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (बिनती का अंग, पृ० 103-105)



Prayers of Swami Ji Maharaj in Saar Bachan:

घट का पट खोल दिखाओ॥ टेक ॥

यह मन जुझ जुझ कर हारा। लगे न एक उपाओ॥

तुम समरथ कहा नहीं तुम्हरे। क्यों एती देर लगाओ॥

O Master, open the door of the heart. The mind has tried and tried and failed; not once has it succeeded. You are all-powerful and lacking nothing, why do You tarry?

मैं दुख सुख में खाऊँ झकोले। क्यों न पड़ा मेरा अब तक दाओ॥

अब ही दया करो मेरे दाता। मन और सूरत गगन चढ़ाओ॥

I am tossed between pain and pleasure; why have I not yet had a chance? Have mercy, O Bountiful One! Take my mind and attention to the skies.

मन तो दुष्ट बिरह नहिं लावे। प्रेम प्रीत का दान दिवाओ॥

यह तो सुख झूठे ही चाहे। सच्च की परतीत न लाओ॥

The mind is evil and does not long for You; give me the boon of love. The mind asks for false comforts, and does not know the Reality.

भोग विलास जगत के मॉगे। सुरत शब्द का रस नहीं पाओ॥

क्योंकर कहूँ किस बिधि समझाऊँ। गुरु का बचन न रिदे समाओ॥

It hankers after worldly pleasures, and does not taste the Nectar of the Sound. What should I tell the mind, and how should I persuade it? It does not take to heart the words of the Master.

इस मन की कुछ घढ़त अनोखी। शब्द माहिं कुछ प्रेम न भाओ॥

कैसे बचे पचे चौरासी। यह नहीं चढ़ता गुरु की नाओ॥

संसारी के धक्के खावे। फिर जमपुर में पिटता जाओ॥

The mind is strangely made; it does not love and care for the Shabd. How can it escape the cycle of eighty-four? It does not repeat the Name of the Master. I will be buffeted in this world, and will be dragged headlong to the regions of death.

ऐसे दुख सहगा बहुतक। अब नहीं माने गया भुलाओ॥

सब घट में गुरु तुमहीं प्रेरक। मुझ दुखिया को क्यों न बुलाओ॥

I have borne these sufferings for a long time. The mind does not heed and has forgotten. You are the moving spirit in all hearts, O Master, why do You not call this sufferer to You?

तुम बिन और न कोई मेरा। चार लोक में तुमहिं दिखाओ॥

अब तो दया करो राधास्वामी। जैसे बने तैसे घाट चढ़ाओ॥

Except for You I have no other; You alone can take me to the Eternal Abode. Have mercy, O Radha Soami, and take me to the other shore.

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (33:18, पृ० 278)



अब मैं कौन कुमति उरझानी। देश पराया भई हूँ बिगानी॥

अब की बार मोहिं लेओ सुधारी। मैं चरनन पर निस दिन वारी॥

I may now commit an unwise action, I am a stranger in a strange land. Set me on the right path in this life, I bow at Your feet every day.

रहुं पछताय झुर्रूँ मन अपने। कैसे लगूँ मैं संग पिया अपने॥

मैं धरती पिया बसें बकासा। बिन पाये पिया रहूँ उदासा॥

I repeat and feel remorse in my mind, how am I to join my Lord? I live on earth while my Lord is in the skies, without my Beloved I remain depressed.

हे सतगुरु सुनो मेरी टेरा। काल चक्र अब मारो घेरा॥

दीन दुखी होय करत पुकारी। सुन स्वामी यह बिनती हमारी॥

O Master, hear my prayer, Kaal has entangled me in his meshes. I am helpless and wretched and cry to You, O Master, hear

my prayer. You are merciful and provide for everyone. I am the unfortunate one who is full of sufferings.

क्या कहूँ मैं अब अपनी पीर की। जस कोइ छेदत भाल तीर की॥

तब स्वामी ने दियो दिलासा। प्रेम पंख ले उड़ो अकासा।

दया हुई अब मिली पिया से। हरी पीर दुख दूर जिया से॥

What can I say about my pains? It is as if I were pierced by the point of an arrow. You, O Master, have now given me hope that I may fly in the sky with the wings of love. By Your mercy I have met my Lord, all pain is gone and my heart is free of troubles.

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (33:2, पृ० 263)



सतगुरु मेरी सुनो पुकार। मैं टेरत बारम्बार॥

दुरमत मेरी दूर निकारो। मुझे कर लो चरन अधारो॥

O Master, hear my prayer, I pray again and again. Remove my evil thoughts. Give me shelter at Your feet.

मोहि भौजल पार उतारो। मेरी पड़ी नाव मैंझधारो॥

तुम बिन अब कोइ न सहारो। अपना कर मुझे सम्हारो॥

Take me across the ocean of this universe, my boat is in the middle of the stream. There is no support but You. Make me Your own and support me.

मैं कपटी कुटिल तुम्हारो। तुम दाता अपर अपारो॥

मैं दीन दुखी अति भारो। जब चाहों तब निस्तारो॥

I am cunning and a hypocrite but Yours. You are the limitless Bountiful Lord. I am helpless and extremely wretched, pray, free me whenever You please.

मैं आरत करूँ तुम्हारी। तन मन धन तुम पर वारी॥

अब मिला सहारा भारी। मैं नाच अजान अनाड़ी॥

I do Your adoration, I surrender my mind and body and soul to You, and have now found a great support. I am lowly, unformed and unskilled.

घट भेद नाद समझाया। मन बैरी स्वाद न पाया॥

दुख सुख में बहु भरमाया। जग मान बड़ाई चाहा॥

You have placed the secret of the Sound in the heart. The immortal mind did not find it tasteful. I have been deluded by pleasure and pain. I hanker after worldly honour.

उलटूं मैं इसको क्यों कर। बिन दया तुम्हारी सतगुरु॥

अब खैंचो राधास्वामी मन को। मैं विनय सुनाऊं तुमको॥

How can I reverse the actions of the mind without help given by You, my Master? O Radha Soami, draw up the mind, I make this earnest plea to You.

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (33:9, पृ० 270)



माँगूँ इक गुरु से दाना। घट शब्द देव पहिचाना॥

मन साथ सदा भरमाना। कर किरपा कर्म छुड़ाना॥

I ask a boon of the Master. Pray, let the Shabd manifest itself in my heart. The mind always leads to delusion. Pray, rid my mind of all actions, that the soul may rise and hear the Melody.

सुर्त चढ़े सुने धुन ताना। मन मारो कर्म नसाना॥

सब छूटे बान कुबाना। सत शब्द मिले दृढ़ थाना॥

Control the mind and make it actionless, so that all actions, good and bad, may cease. That I may hear the Shabd at the proper place.

अब कर दो नाम दिवाना। मैं ताकूँ शब्द निशाना॥

कोइ करे न मेरी हाना। मोहिं तुम पर बल बल जाना॥

Pray, make me mad after the Name, that I may reach the goal of Shabd, that none may cause me injury, that I may die for You.

कल धारा मुझे न बहाना। मोहिं देना शब्द ठिकाना॥

मन हो गया बहुत निमाना। अब राधास्वामी चरन समाना॥

Pray, do not let me drift with the current of Kaal, but give me the honour of the Shabd. The mind is very unruly; I take shelter at the feet of Radha Soami.

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (33:11), पृ० 272)



गुरु मोहि दीजे अपना धाम॥ टेक ॥

मैं तो निकाम भर्म बस रहता। तुम दयाल लो मोको थाम॥

ना जानूँ क्या पाप कमाये। गहे न सूरत नाम॥

O Lord, pray, take me to Your Home for I am idle and deluded.

O Merciful One! pray, hold me, I do not know what sins I have committed. My soul does not yet grasp the Name.

कैसी करूँ ज़ोर नहीं चाले। मन नहीं पावे दृढ़ विश्राम॥

हे सतगुरु अब दया विचारो। मैं दुख में रहूँ आठों जाम॥

What am I to do, force does not work? The mind does not remain at rest. O Merciful One, have compassion on me, I am wretched all the time.

ना सुर्त चढ़े न मन ठहरावे। शब्द महातम नहिं पतियाम॥

संत मता ऊंचा सुन पकड़ा। क्यों नहिं संत करें मेरी साम॥

The soul does not rise, and the mind is not calm. I do not get the benefit of Shabd. The path of the Master is said to be high; so I follow it. Why do the Saints not help me?

संत मते को लज्जा आवे। जो मेरा नहिं पूरन काम॥

अपनी मति ले करूँ पुकारा। मौज तुम्हारी मैं नहिं जाम॥

The path of the Saints will be put to shame if I do not succeed in full. I make this prayer according to my own will, for I am not aware of what Your wish may be.

बार बार मैं विनय पुकारूँ। जस जानो तस देओ निज नाम॥

राधास्वामी कहें निज नामी। दर्दी को चहिये आराम॥

I cry again and again, hear me, and give me Your own Name. When Radha Soami gives His own Name, a sufferer may take rest.

— सार-बचन छंद बंद (33:13, पृ० 273)



छुटुं मैं कैसे इस मन से। सुरत यह कहती निज मन से॥

जाल इन डाला बहु रस से। छुटाया मोहि धुर घर से॥

How am I to be freed from the mind? says the soul to the mind. It has cast the net of pleasures. It has separated me from the Original Home.

बंधी मैं आय दन दस से। किया परपंच इन मुझ से॥

द्वार मैं आन नौ परसे। गिराया मोहि दस दर से॥

I am in the bondage of the ten senses, and they have all deceived me. I am surrounded by the nine desires; I have been cast out of the tenth door.

लगी अब लाग भोगन से। छुटूँ क्यों हाय इस फँद से॥

गुरु बिन कोई नहीं दरसे। निकाले मोहि इस वन से॥

Now I am attached to the sense pleasures, how can I escape from this snare? I see no one but the Master who can take me out of this jungle.

कांपती मैं फिरुं जम से। छुड़ावे कौन इस डर से॥

पशू सम हो गई नर से। करी नहीं प्रीत मैं गुरु से॥

I tremble because of death; who can free me from this fear? From a human being I have become a beast. I have not loved the Master.

डार ज्यों टूट गई जड़ से। पड़ी मैं दूर निज घर से॥

करुं फर्याद सतगुरु से। लगाओ मोहि चरनन से॥

Like a broken branch from a tree, I am lying far from my Original Home. I humbly beg the Master with all earnestness, keep me at Your feet.

दूर करो मैल सतसंग से। होय फिर भिन्न इस तन से॥

मिले तब जाय सुन धुन से। अमीरस पाय तब सरसे॥

Cleanse me of dirt by Your company, so that I may feel separate from the body. I may then unite with the Melody of Sunn (spiritual region of the Void). I may get the Nectar from the jar.

शब्द से जाय कर परसे। मिटे दुख फिर नहीं तरसे॥

लगूं मैं आय राधा से। करूँ मैं प्रीत स्वामी से॥

When the Master unites me with the Shabd, suffering is removed and no fear remains. I am connected to the Sound Current. I may love the Lord.

करो राधास्वामी तुम अपना। पड़ी मैं आय तुम सरना॥

O Radha Soami, make me Your own, I have taken refuge with You.

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (31:2, पृ० 254)



Prayers of Meera Bai:

अब मैं सरण हिरी जी, मोहिं राखो कृपानिधान॥ टेक॥

I am now in Your shelter. O merciful Lord.

अजामील अपराधी ता रे, तारे नीच सदान।

जल डूवत गजराज उबा रे, गणिका चढ़ी बिमान॥

You redeemed Ajamil, the sinner, You redeemed Sadhna, You saved the elephant from drowning, the courtesan rode the air chariot.

और अधम तारे बहुते रे, भाखत संत सुजान।

कुबजा नीच भीलनी तारी, जानै सकल जहान॥

You redeemed many other sinners, the wise Saints say this is so.

You redeemed the lowly forest woman and Kubja, this is known to all the world.

कहूँ लागि कहूँ गिनत नहिं आवै, थकि रहे बेद पुरान ।

मीरा कहै मैं सरण रावली, सुनियो दोनों कान ॥

How can I mention all? They are a legion. Even the Vedas and Purans have failed to accomplish this. O Lord! Meera has taken shelter with You; hear this with both Thy ears.

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 28)



मेरा बेड़ा लगाय दीजो पार, प्रभु जी अरज करूँ छूँ ॥ टेक ॥

I beseech You to take my boat across.

या भव में मैं बहु दुख पायो, संसा सोग निवार ॥

अष्ट करम की तलब लगी है, दूर करो दुख पार ॥

I have suffered greatly in this world, doubt and sorrow have tortured me. Now have compassion on me, remove my suffering and take me across.

यो संसार सब बह्यो जात है, लख चौरासी धार ॥

मीरा के प्रभु गिरिधर नागर, आवागवन निवार ॥

All this world is drifting in the current of the eighty-four; O Merciful Lord of Meera, pray, end the transmigration.

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 28)



म्हँरो जनम मरन को साथी, थाँ ने नहिं बिसरूँ दिन राती ॥ टेक ॥

O Lord, my companion in birth and death, I would never desert you day and night.

तुम देख्याँ बिन कल न पड़त है, जानत मेरी छाती ।

ऊँची चढ़ चढ़ पंथ निहारूँ, रोय रोय अँखिया राती ॥

I feel no rest without seeing You, my heart feels it so. I rise high and see the Path – by weeping all through the night.

यो संसार सकल जग झूँठो, झूँठा कुल रा नाती ।

दोड कर जोड़याँ अरज करत हूँ, सुण लीज्यो मेरी बाती ॥

This world is all illusion, family and relations are all false. I pray with folded hands, O hear my prayer!

यो मन मेरो बड़ो हरामी, ज्यूँ मद मातो हाथी ।

सतगुरु दस्त धरयो सिर ऊपर, आँकुस दे समझाती ॥

This mind of mine is very unruly, like a wild elephant running amok; the Master has placed His hand on its head, and I try to persuade it by force.

मीरा के प्रभु गिरधर नागर, हरि चरणों चित राती ।

पल पल तेरा रूप निहारूँ, निरख निरख सुख पाती ॥

Meera's Lord is merciful, she has united her heart to His feet. I look at Your Form every moment, on seeing You, I feel happy.

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 28)



मीरा को प्रभु साची दासी बनाओ । झूठे धंधों से मेरा फंदा छुड़ाओ ॥ टेक ॥

लूटे ही लेत बिबेक का डेरा, बुद्धि बल यदपि करूँ बहुतेरा ॥

O Lord! Make Meera Your true slave and release me from false acts. My intellect is robbing me of my wisdom, although I try hard.

हाय राम नहीं कछु बंस मेरा, मरत हूँ बिबस प्रभु धाओ सबेरा ॥

धर्म उपदेस नित प्रति सुनती हूँ, मन कुचाल से भी डरती हूँ ॥

I try to control the mind, O Lord, but I am helpless and dying; O, come soon to me, my Lord. Each day I hear religious discourses, but still I am afraid of the evil mind.

सदा साधु सेवा करती हूँ, सुमिरण ध्यान में चित धरती हूँ ॥

भक्ति मार्ग दासी को दिखाओ, मीरा को प्रभु साची दास बनाओ ॥

Without fail I always serve the Holy Men, and I busy myself in remembrance and contemplation. Pray, show Thy slave the path of devotion, O Lord, make Meera Your true devoted slave.

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 30)



तुम पलक उघाढ़ो दीनानाथ,

हूँ हाजिर नाजिर कबकी खड़ी ॥ टेक ॥

Do open Your eyes, O Lord! I have been standing besides You for long.

साऊ थे दुसमण होइ लागे, सब ने लगूँ कड़ी ।

तुम बिन साऊ कोऊ नहीं है, डिगी नाव मेरी समंद अड़ी ॥

My friends have turned into foes, I am disliked by all. I have no friend but You, my boat is tossing in the sea.

दिन नहीं चैन रात नहीं निदरा, सूखूँ खड़ी खड़ी ।

बान बिरह के लगे हिये में, भूलूँ न एक घड़ी ॥

*I have no rest all day or sleep at night, I stand alone and wither.
My heart is pierced by the arrows of separation, I cannot forget
this even for a moment.*

पत्थर की तो अहिल्या तारी, बन के बीच पड़ी।

कहा बोझ मीरा में कहिये, सौ ऊपर एक धड़ी॥

*You redeemed Ahilya who had turned into stone and was lying
in the forest. Meera is over-burdened with sorrows.*

गुरु रैदास मिले मोहिं पूरे, धुर से कलम भिड़ी।

सतगुरु सैन दर्ई जब आ के, जोत में जोत रली॥

*I have met the Perfect Master, Ravi Das. He came from our
Original Home in the heavens. When the Master showed me the
world within, Light merged into Light.*

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 31)



तुम सुनो दयाल म्हाँरी अरजी॥ टेक॥

भौसागर में बही जात हूँ, काढ़ो तो थॉरी मरजी॥

यो संसार सगो नहिं कोई, साचा सगा रघुबर जी॥

O Merciful Lord, do listen to my prayer.

I am drifting on the ocean of this world, take me out of it, I beg You.

There is no friend in this world, the only true friend is the Lord.

मात पिता और कुटुंब कबीलो, सब मतलब के गरजी॥

मीरा को प्रभु अरजी सुन लो, चरन लगाओ थॉरी मरजी॥

*Father, mother and family members, all have their own ends to
serve. O Lord! Hear the prayer of Meera, be pleased to give her a
place at Your feet, if You so desire.*

-- मीराबाई की शब्दावली (पृ० 31)



Prayers of Dharam Das:

भक्ति दान गुरु दीजिये देवन के देवा हो।

चरन कँवल बिसरौं नहीं करिहौं पद सेवा हो॥

*O Master, Lord of Lords, give me the boon of devotion; may I
never forget to serve the feet of the Master while I live.*

तिरथ बरत मैं ना करौं ना देवल पूजा हो॥

तुमहिं ओर निरखत रहौं मेरे और न दूजा हो॥

I do not fast, or go on pilgrimage, or worship in a temple; I am controlling my mind, my speech and my actions.

आठ सिद्धि नौ निद्धि हैं बैकुंठ निवासा हो ।

सो मैं ना कछु माँगहूँ मेरे समरथ दाता हो । ।

The eight kinds of Siddhis (Occult powers), the nine kinds of Riddhis (Material powers) or dwelling place in heaven, these I ask not, O my powerful and bountiful Lord.

सुख सम्पत्ति परिवार धन सुन्दर बर नारी हो ।

सुपनेहु इच्छा ना उठै गुरु आन तुम्हारी हो । ।

Articles of comfort, family, wealth and a beautiful wife in my home, these I do not desire even in dream, I swear by You, my Master.

धरमदास की बीनती साहेब सुनि लीजै हो ।

दरसन देहु पट खोलि का आपन करि लीजै हो । ।

Hear the prayer of Dharam Das, O Lord; give Your Darshan, opening his Third Eye and make him Your own.

-- धनी धर्मदास जी की शब्दावली (पृ० 17)



Prayer of Soordas:

अब की राखि लेहु भगवान । ।

हम अनाथ बैठी द्रुम डरियाँ, पारधि साध्यो बान । ।

ता के डर निकसन चाहत हौं, ऊपर रह्यो सचान । ।

दोऊ भाँति दुख भयो कृपानिधि, कौन उबारै प्रान । ।

सुमिरत ही अहि डर्यो पारधी, लाग्यो तीर सचान । ।

सूरदास गुन हिँ लग बरनौं, जै जै कृपानिधान । ।

-- संत बाणी संग्रह भाग-2 (पृ० 55)

O save me this time, my Lord;

I am sitting unprotected on the branch of a tree.

The hunter (Kaam Dev) has his arrow pointed at me.

I want to escape him, but a falcon is hovering over me.

I am between two dangers, O Merciful Lord, who is to save me?

As soon as I remembered You, a serpent stung the hunter and the arrow struck the falcon.

How can Soordas praise Your virtues? All glory to You, O Merciful Lord.



तुम मेरी राखो लाज हरी ॥
 तुम जानत सब अन्तरजामी, करनी कछु न करी ॥
 औगुन मोसे बिसरत नाहीं, पल छिन घरी घरी ॥
 सब प्रपंच की पोट बांध करि, अपने सीस धरी ॥
 दारा सुत धन मोह लिये हौं, सुधि बुधि सब बिसरी ॥
 सूर पतित को बेग उधारो, अब मेरी नाव भरी ॥

-- संत बाणी संग्रह भाग-2 (पृ० 54)

*Save my honour, O Lord;
 You know all. I have earned no merit.
 I cannot give up evil deeds even for a moment, what to say of
 hours; I bear on my head the burden of hypocrisy.
 To wife, son and wealth am I attached, and I have lost my senses.
 Redeem Soordas the sinner, my boat is full to the brim.*





HUMILITY

(*Namrata* नम्रता, *Deenata* दीनता)

Outer Humility

In order to be deserving of the Lord's Grace, we have to empty the heart of vainglory, for, unless a vessel is empty, it can contain nothing. Because of humility, Kaal and Maya cannot affect us. All the Saints have adopted it, and adorned themselves with it.

What is false pride or vainglory? To be proud of a virtue we do not possess, or we possess merely as a gift from someone else, is false pride. We do not deserve to be respected or honoured, because we belong to a noble family of great deeds or because our ancestors selflessly gave in charity. We can understand it from an example. The Lord makes someone a treasurer. He has in that capacity heaps of money. How can he be proud of that? They are in trust with him and have to be disbursed according to the directions of the owner. If the treasurer is proud of this money, it is false pride. The owner can remove him whenever he likes. Similarly, a man may be riding a horse, while putting on a costly costume and may feel proud of it. All this pride is misplaced. In reality, it is the horse or the costume or the tailor who made it, who should feel proud. It would be meanness on his part to snatch and appropriate the credit for this. Another person is proud of his beautiful hair, fair face, soft hand or healthy body and walks about the streets like a bloated bag. Such pride is false; pride, such as this, is due to that all powerful Creator and nature, which made him or to the soul granted by the Lord. The Guru has said:

नानक ते नर असलि खर जि बिनु गुण गरबु करंत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 4, पृ० 1411)

O Nanak, those who are proud without virtue are really donkeys. A man who is proud without possessing the virtues is really a donkey.

जिह प्रसादि तेरा सुंदर रूपु ॥ सो प्रभु सिमरहु सदा अनूपु ॥

जिह प्रसादि तेरी नीकी जाति ॥ सो प्रभु सिमरि सदा दिन राति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 270)

By whose Grace you have a beauteous face, always remember that wonderful Lord. By whose Grace you have got this excellent species, always remember that Lord day and night.

Another person is proud of his knowledge and talent. He is not entitled to this pride. This is due to the teacher who taught him and the intellect given to him by the Lord. Of what should a man be proud in this world? People are proud of wealth and property. These are evanescent like the declining shade. People are proud of youth, which is lost in disease and old age. In the first place, these do not remain the same but if they do, it is only for a short time. These fall like leaves of a tree.

धनु जोबनु अरु फुलड़ा नाठीअड़े दिन चारि ॥

पबणि केरे पत जिउ ढलि ढुलि जुंमणहार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 23)

Wealth, youth and flowers last for a short time, like the Pabban (a small lotus plant) leaves, they wither away as they sprout.

Let those who are proud of family and its members see with their open eyes the value of getting entangled in the attachment of children and lured by their sweet talk and antics. Man is like a guest for the night, who has to leave in the morning. Being here for a night it is useless to build schemes for ages. Houses, temples and wealth change like the shade of a tree. This world is like an inn (sarai सराय) visited by persons who constantly give place to others. Body, son, wife, family, etc., which he considers eternal, are with him for a few days only, and would then have to be given up. None of these would accompany him. It is therefore useless and in vain to be proud of them. These are like a dream.

झूठै मानु कहा करै जगु सुपने जिउ जानु ॥
इन मै कुछ तेरो नही नानक कहिओ बखानि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक म० 9, पृ० 1428)

*Why are you falsely proud of this world, which is like a dream?
Nothing is yours in it, says Nanak.*

Worldly pride and grandeur is like the saffron plant, which multiplies when trampled upon. If one turns his back on worldly pride and pays attention to Reality, its realization increases constantly. The real beauty belongs to the soul, in which dwell love, coolness, peace and calmness and through which the body is glorified. The body, in which the Lord dwells, is indeed beautiful.

काइआ कामणि अति सुआलिहउ पिरु वसै जिसु नाले ॥
पिर सचे ते सदा सुहागणि गुर का सबदु सम्हाले ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 3, पृ० 754)

*The body is the beauteous bride with whom abideth the Lord.
Eternally she enjoys the love of her spouse catching hold of the
Master's Word.*

That knowledge is blessed and really praise-worthy, which is utilized in trying to understand the Lord and in singing His glory. All other knowledge becomes the cause of our shame, for by swelling our ego, it leads us millions of miles away from the reality and only the pride of knowledge remains.

It is generally observed that people parade their qualities, in order to attain position and honour. In this way, they become seekers after honour, titles and positions. Only that position or prestige is praiseworthy, which springs in the heart of others, because of our being full of virtues and owing to the tall stature of our simplicity and humility, and not that gained by propaganda or spending money. Such pride and glory is to be despised. The flowers that grow out of earth are beautiful. They however wither, when plucked and rubbed between the fingers. They lose their freshness. Their scent and colour disappear. Those who enjoy the smell and colour of the flowers from a distance are happy. When they bring their noses in contact with them and smell

them for a long time it has a bad effect and sometimes the hidden poison makes them deleterious. Similar is the case with worldly rank and honour. To love virtues and to make an effort to acquire them, make us full of them. But to run after honours and positions and to try for them, keeps us away from reality and makes us despicable. It leads to the fall of our soul. We should aim at realizing the Lord and not try for that, which keeps us away.

लोकन कीआ वडिआईआ बैसंतरि पागउ ॥

जिउ मिलै पिआरा आपना ते बोल करागउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 808)

The glories of the world, I cast into fire. I chant those words, by which I may meet by Beloved.

It is true that one who finds pearls, does not amass heaps of shells. Those who seek the Lord, do not run after outer show and glory. They remain happy in the Will of the Lord, and the greatness of their soul can be glimpsed in whatever work the Lord puts them on.

Inner Humility

From the previous discussion, it is clear that it is not proper to be proud of worldly pleasures. The thought of countless bounties of the Lord and our innumerable sins and defects makes us beggars at His Door. We should therefore think as to which of His bounties we are acknowledging and what we are doing for them. As long as we believe that whatever good or evil we possess is not because of us, but from Him, we cannot be proud of anything. What are the bounties, which we have not received from the Lord! Having received them, what have we done to show our gratitude and in respect of which of them? If this line of thought leads to pride, then the thought of our defects and ingratitude is a sure remedy. We always say that we are nothing, we are of no consequence and others are better. But if others say the same thing about us, we would be very sorry as we think that our state is quite the reverse. Those, who really inwardly believe that they are the lowest, are really spiritual.

कबीर सभ ते हम बुरे हम तजि भलो सभु कोइ ।।

जिनि ऐसा करि बूझिआ मीतु हमारा सोइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1364)

O Kabir, I am the worst, everybody else is good. Whoever understands this is a friend of mine. (Kabir)

We try to make a show of avoiding the gaze of the world and hiding ourselves, but in reality, desire that it should run after us and find us out. We sit in meetings on a back bench or on a low seat so that we may be seated in the front or on a high seat. True humility never makes a show, nor indulges in humble words. A really humble man not only wants to hide himself and his virtues, but also tries to keep himself out of the sight of the world. With this end in view, he sometimes does acts which bring him a bad name, so that he can hide himself under their cover. Yogis and Saints have behaved in this way. Gopichand and Bhartrhari lived in the house of a potter and engaged in austerities, but in order to keep off the ruler of that place and other people, they put up a show of quarrel over articles of food and invited criticism. Guru Nanak put on the garb of a hunter and took a dagger and dogs with him. All others stepped aside, but Lehna Ji stuck fast to him.

Kabir Sahib took bottles in his hands and in the company of a woman disciple and Ravidas, the cobbler walked through the bazaar singing hymns. There was water in the bottles, but people thought it was wine. The water was poured before the Rajah. Ravidas said this had been done to extinguish the fire at the temple of Jagannath. Rajah sent his man to Jagannath. The man made enquiries and reported that on that day the temple had in fact caught fire and Kabir Sahib had extinguished it.

It therefore behooves us not to utter words of sham humility. If we do utter such words they should represent our real inner feelings. We should not lower our eyes, unless our mind accepts humility and poverty. Unless we feel a genuine desire for humility and poverty, we should not

express it. Of course, as truly civilized and civil persons, we should address others with respect and in accordance with good manners. We should behave humbly and to show regard for the guest, utter words in humility. This befits us as human beings. There can be no doubt that we should utter words which come from our heart to our guests. A truly humble heart desires that instead of his saying so, others should say of him that he is the most inconsequential and unimportant person. If anyone says this of him, he does not feel offended, but is happy to feel that there is at least one man who thinks of him, as he himself does.

Some persons under the cover of humility, give up inner prayers because of being imperfect. They do not think themselves fit for them. Some say that they do not advise others, as they themselves are not perfectly faultless. Some do not wish to use their talents in the service of the Lord, because they know their weakness best and are afraid, lest while doing service, they should feel proud and while showing light to others, may ruin themselves in the fire of pride and conceit. These thoughts do not arise, when one is truly humble. These are only attempts to justify one's idleness and cowardice. They, on the one hand, make a great show of feelings for the Lord and his incarnation, the Master, and on the other hand, under the cover of humility, want to keep themselves deprived of the great humility, which He in His mercy wishes to shower on them.

The Lord and Master desire that we should be perfect like Him and thus obtain His Grace.

कबीर पानी हुआ त किआ भइआ सीरा ताता होइ ॥

हरि जनु ऐसा चाहीऐ जैसा हरि ही होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1372)

Kabir, what then, if one could become water, which turns cold and hot. The humble devotee of the Lord should be just like the Lord. (Kabir)

The man who has no confidence in himself, puts forth arguments and reasons for not doing his duty, but a man of

prayer, although he feels utterly incompetent, knowing fully well that he is not fit for it and cannot perform it, surrenders with full faith and fortitude everything to the Lord and His incarnation, the Master, and engages himself in carrying out the directions for fulfilling the task given to him by the Master.

The truth is that to think we know, what we do not know, is sheer ignorance. When we do not know a thing, it is absurd to make others believe that we know it. We should not exhibit our knowledge, skill and know-how. It is, however, not proper to feign ignorance. Of course, when we meet a person desirous of knowing that thing, we should not hide anything from him and tell him everything for his guidance. Humility should hide our virtues and perfections till such time as the need for redemption of our own soul exists. This is not a moral or worldly quality, but a godly virtue.

In true humility, we need not pass ourselves as fools or parade ourselves as wise men. Just as pride is opposite of humility, so deceit, pretence, cleverness, show, hypocrisy, cunning and worldly crookedness are opposite of calmness and right conduct. If the worldly wise, in order to gain their ends, dub right conduct as mean and foolish, the truly humble person should bear the backbiting and criticism cheerfully, the cause of this backbiting is not in him, but in others. The Master has said:

जे लोड़हि चंगा आपणा करि पुंनहु नीचु सदाईऐ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० १, पृ० ४६५)

If you yearn to be good, then perform good deeds and be humble.

Signs of Humility

True humility produces sweetness in our heart and the words uttered by us would be sweet. All life currents would also be delicious. The sweetness would be the same for all. Our neighbours and others would feel its sweetness. All our sayings and actions, whether great or small, would be full of humility. They would dye their relations and others in the

same hue. Guru Nanak says that sweetness or humility and meekness is the essence of all virtues. He who has this virtue is the fountain-head of all virtues.

मिठतु नीवी नानका गुण चंगिआईआ ततु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 470)

O Nanak, sweetness and humility are the essence of all virtues.

The Method of acquiring True Greatness

In order to get true respect and prestige, it is necessary to have humility and meekness. Only he, who has them, can worship and treat others with courtesy. Kabir Sahib says,

दीन गरीबी बन्दगी, सब से आदर भाव ।

कह कबीर तेई बड़ा, जा में बड़ा सुभाव ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दीनता का अंग 4, पृ० 49)

Have humility, purity and meekness and treat others with courtesy. O Kabir, he is truly great, who is good tempered.

Some persons consider humility and meekness as weakness and helplessness. They believe in tit for tat. However, what can be achieved with humility, cannot be had by using harsher methods. Fire has its own place, but it is only when in humility it is reduced to ashes, that it can be applied to the forehead. Those who wish to attain true greatness and glory should develop the above-mentioned virtues. Jesus Christ says,

He that is least among you all, the same is great. (Luke 9:48)

He who considers himself to be the meanest, is the greatest. Guru Arjan also says to the same effect:

आपस कउ जो जाणै नीचा ॥ सोऊ गनीऐ सभ ते ऊचा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 266)

One who sees himself as lowly, shall be accounted as the highest of all.

The tenth Guru has said that as a man progresses, he grows in humility also.

Lao-tse, the great Chinese Saint, while describing the virtues of a good man, has mentioned love, sympathy, gentle disposition, frugality and humility or meekness amongst them. It is due to humility, that such a man becomes a leader of men.

If one gives up these virtues, and tries to become great through wealth, selfishness, pride, falsehood, deceit, cleverness, pretence, exhibition of knowledge or propaganda, it is conclusive proof of his being mean. He is like a date tree, which can provide no shade to a traveller, nor can its fruit remove the hunger, as being very high, it is out of reach. Kabir Sahib says,

बड़ा हुआ तो क्या हुआ, जैसे पेड़ खजूर।

पंथी को छाया नहीं, फल लागै अति दूर॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (मान और हँगता का अंग 10, पृ० 143)

What does it matter if you are tall like a date tree? It provides no shade to the traveller and its fruit is too high.

Fruits of Humility

We should make our hearts the source of love for the entire universe and should have so much humility that even if a person does evil to us, we should return love for the same. In truth, one who is embellished with humility, loses the capacity of stinging others. Even if anyone harms him, he does not think evil of him. Sheikh Sa'adi says,

मन आं मूरम किह् दर पायम बमालंद, न जंबूरम किह् अज नेशम बनालंद।

-- सा'दी, गुलिस्तान (पृ० 126)

I am like an ant which is trampled over. I am not like a bee which stings.

Egoism or pride is not liked by the Lord. He showers His Grace on those whose mind is full of humility and meekness. Water does not gather at the top of hills, but flows down and accumulates there. He who bends, drinks water, but he who holds his head high, remains thirsty.

Kabir Sahib says,

ऊँचे पानी ना टिके, नीचे ही ठहराय।

नीचा होय सो भार पिवै, ऊँचा प्यासा जाय॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दीनता का अंग 8, पृ० 150)

Water does not accumulate at high places but does so at low places; he who bends, drinks; the stiff-necked remains thirsty.

In order to obtain the bounty of Grace of the Lord, the ground of our heart should be dyed in the hue of humili-

ty. The Lord does not like proud persons, but showers His mercy on the humble. Saint James says,

God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble. (Bible, James 4:6)

Hafiz Sahib says,

ज़हिद गुरुर दाश्त सलामत,

नबर्दे—राह रिंद अज़ रहे—नियाज़ बदारुल—सलाम रफ़्त ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 86)

The devout was proud and did not tread the path safely. The devotee, owing to humility, reached the destination.

Humility is a good means of imbibing the virtues of others. If we wish to imbibe them, we should be humble and poor.

Guru Arjan says that you should come to him, when you have become the dust of the feet of others.

होहु सभना की रेणुका तउ आउ हमारै पासि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 5, पृ० 1102)

After becoming the dust of the feet of others, come to me.

The path of finding the Lord consists in becoming humble and meek, because we cannot deserve His Grace and carry out wishes of the Indescribable, unless we give up pride and vainglory and meet some God intoxicated Saint and become His servants.

दासनि दास दास होइ रहीऐ जो जन राम भगत निज भईआ ।।

मनु बुधि अरपि धरउ गुर आगै गुर परसादी मै अकथु कथईआ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 4, पृ० 834)

Those who are the Lord's own, live as servants of His servants. They surrender their mind and intellect at the feet of the Master and by His Grace, carry out the directions of the Indescribable.

When we give up all pride and bow at His Door, our souls become pure and we are saved from being burnt by the fire of passions. When we become servants of His servants, we find a place at His Door.

चरण पखारि करउ गुर सेवा आतम सुधु बिखु तिआस निवारी ।।

दासन की होइ दासि दासरी ता पावहि सोभा हरि दुआरी ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 377)

His feet and serve the Master. Thus, the soul is sanctified, and the thirst for sin is quenched. When he becomes servant of His servants, he finds a place at His door.

Pride goes before a fall and a proud man does not imbibe the virtues of others. The humble and the meek can get spiritual wealth from the spiritually-minded persons. After finding the path, he in all humility assiduously treads it. This is due to the Grace of the Lord and the Master. If we do not take a humble and meek attitude before doing a good deed, do not retain it while doing, and do not consider it a gift by the Grace of the Lord and the Master after it is done, it is snatched from our hands by pride amidst our rejoicings. The way to God is firstly humility, secondly humility and thirdly humility. Again, unless humility precedes, accompanies and follows every good action which we perform, pride wrests wholly from our hands any good work on which we are congratulating ourselves.

How to Win over the Lord

What is that knowledge, virtue, or best amongst diamonds we should get and which is that dress, by putting on which, we win over our Lord? Guru Arjan Sahib answers that that knowledge is humility, that virtue is simplicity, and that pure diamond is a sweet tongue. Wear the dress of these three and your consort will be in your power.

कवणु सु वेसो हउ करी जितु वसि आवै कंतु ॥

निवणु सु अखरु खवणु गुणु जिहबा मणीआ मंतु ॥

ए त्रै भैणे वेस करि तां वसि आवी कंतु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1384)

What is it that is dear to the spouse? What are the clothes, which I can wear to captivate my Husband Lord? Humility is the word, forgiveness is the virtue, and sweet speech is the magic mantra. Wear these three robes, O sister, and you will captivate your Husband Lord. (Farid)

The sayings of Saints and holy men give glimpses of this humility, meekness and simplicity. Hafiz says that on

the path of love there is no difference between the rich and the poor. He prays:

दार राहे-इश्क फर्क-गनी-ओ-फकीर नीस्त,
ऐ पादशाहे-हुस्न सुखन बा गदा बिगो।
हरचंद मा बदेम तू मा रा मगीर,
शाहाना माजराए गुनाहे-गदा बिगो।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 353-54)

O Master, you are a Beauteous King. Look at this beggar at Your Door also. I am very sinful, please pay no heed to my deeds; but as a King, be kind to a beggar and cast a look of mercy on this sinner also.

On the path of love, there is no difference between the rich and the poor. O Beauteous King, say a word to this beggar. I am a great sinner but look not at my sins. In kingly manner speak to this sinful beggar.

A true spiritual seeker, being humble and meek, considers himself to be so inconsequential that he hesitates even in the presence of the Master, and employs others to convey to Him the feelings of his heart. Hafiz uses even air as his messenger.

सबा अज़ इश्के-मन रम्जे बिगो बा आं शहे-खूबां,
किह सद जमशीद-ओ-कैखुसरो गुलामे-कमतरीं दारद।

-- दीवाने-हाफिज़ (पृ० 213)

O wind, carry the message of my humble love to that King of Beauty at whose doors kings and monarchs are standing. Request Him to help me as my companions are mounted while I am tottering on foot on the way.

Sheikh Sa'adi says that a branch laden with fruit bends towards the ground. The Cyprus tree which is devoid of fruit stands erect. In truth when a horse-man reaches his destination, he gets down and walks on foot. He alone can derive full benefit from a Saint, who goes to Him in humility. He who is full of pride of his wisdom, seldom reaches Him and if he does so by mistake, what will he gain? If you want to be admitted to the Court of Saints, go with the cup of humility without any pride, as it is only when the cup is empty that

the flagon bends towards it. If the cup is full to the brim, how can it contain anything more? Respectful humility is accordingly very necessary.

तही दस्तों का रुतबा अहले-दौलत से ज़्यादा है,

सुराही सर झुका देती है जब पैमाना आता है।

The empty-handed have a higher rank than the rich. The flagon bends its neck to the empty cup.

The Grace of the Lord and Master cannot be had forcibly. He melts only on hearing humble prayer. If you are meek and pray to him in humility, He may turn His face towards you, and you obtain His Grace. Therefore give up all pride and vanity, and place the cup of humility before Him, then it would not be surprising if He fills the cup of the beggar.

जोर रा बगुज़ार ओ जारी रा बगीर, रहम सूए ज़ारी आयाद ऐ फकीर।

गर कुनी ज़ारी बयाबी रहमे-ऊ, रहमे-ऊ दर ज़ारी-ए-खुद बाज़ जू।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 5, पृ० 58)

Give up force and take to weeping; mercy is drawn to supplicant, O mendicant! If you weep, you will gain His Mercy. Seek His mercy in your wailing.

Give up reliance on your strength and take to weeping as mercy is drawn towards wailing. If you adopt wailing you will get mercy. Always pray for His mercy, while weeping. To many persons, humility is natural and some learn humility from the sufferings of the world, but true humility can be learnt only in the company of the Saints. They are free from egoism. Humility is their true embellishment. On the removal of egoism, true wisdom dawns. Rumi says,

पाक शौ अज़ ख़ेश ओ हमा ख़ाक़ शौ, ता किह जि ख़ाक़े-तू बिरोयद गयाह।

वर शवी अज़ सोज़ चू ख़ाक़स्तरी, बाशद ख़ाक़स्तर तू कीमीया।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 22)

Give up egoism and become dust so that green grass may spring out of this dust. If you are reduced to ashes because of fire of yearning, your ash acts as alchemy which would turn your iron into gold.

There are verses in the hymns of the Saints which show their humility. After getting boons of high spiritual order, they have expressed feelings of humility. They say,

O Lord and Master, whatever is happening is due to Your Grace.

Guru Nanak gives a beautiful illustration of humility.

सभ अवगण मै गुणु नही कोई ॥ किउ करि कंत मिलावा होई ॥
 ना मै रूपु न बंके नैणा ॥ ना कुल ढंगु न मीठे बैणा ॥
 सहजि सीगार कामणि करि आवै ॥ ता सोहागणि जा कंतै भावै ॥
 ना तिसु रूपु न रेखिआ काई ॥ अंति न साहिबु सिमरिआ जाई ॥
 सुरति मति नाही चतुराई ॥ करि किरपा प्रभ लावहु पाई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 1, पृ० 750)

I am full of defects and utterly devoid of virtue. How may I meet my Husband Lord? I possess no beauty, no enticing eyes. I do not come from a noble family, and have good manners or a sweet voice. The soul-bride adorns herself with peace and poise. She is a happy soul-bride, only if her Husband Lord is pleased with her. He has no form at all or feature and is beyond contemplation. I have no understanding, intellect or cleverness. Have Mercy upon me, God, and attach me to Your Feet.

He further says,

मंजु कुचजी अमावणि डोसडे हउ किउ सहु रावणि जाउ जीउ ॥
 इक दू इकि चडं दीआ कउणु जाणै मेरा नाउ जीउ ॥
 जिन्ही सखी सहु राविआ से अंबी छावड़ीएहि जीउ ॥
 से गुण मंजु न आवनी हउ कै जी दोस धरेउ जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 1, पृ० 762)

I am ungrateful and ill-mannered, full of endless faults. How can I go to enjoy my Husband Lord? Each of His soul-brides is better than the rest – who even knows my name? Those brides who enjoy their Husband Lord are very blessed, resting in the shade of mango tree. I do not possess their virtues – how can I blame anyone?

हम मति हीण मूरख मुगध अंधे सतिगुरि मारणि पाए ॥
 नानक गुरमुखि सबदि सुहावे अनदिनु हरि गुण गाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 3, पृ० 246)

We are unwise, foolish and deluded. O Master! Show us the way. O Nanak! A Gurumukh loves the Shabd and always sings the praise of the Lord.

जो हमरी बिधि होती मेरे सतिगुरा सा बिधि तुम हरि जाणहु आपे ॥
 हम रुलते फिरते कोई बात न पूछता गुर सतिगुर संगि कीरे हम थापे ॥

धनु धनु गुरु नानक जन केरा जितु मिलिऐ चूके सभि सोग संतापे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी बैरागनि म० 4, पृ० 167)

Thou knowest what would be our state without Thee O True Guru. We would have roamed about helplessly, without support. O Blessed Thou, who hath raised us worms to Thy own state; O Blessed, Blessed, is the Guru; says Nanak, on meeting Whom all our woes depart.

मोहि अनाथ गरीब निमानी ॥ कंत पकरि हम कीनी रानी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 394)

I am a poor orphan, destitute and dishonoured. The Lord held me to His bosom and made me His queen.

नीचु अनाथु अजानु मै निरगुनु गुणहीनु ॥

नानक कउ किरपा भई दासु अपना कीनु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिलावल म० 5, पृ० 814)

I was a low caste unknown orphan without virtue and merit. O Nanak! He was kind and made me His slave.

Swami Ji Maharaj prays to the Lord in humility:

गति मति मेरी उलटी पलटी। गुरु कर दइ सूरत सुल्टी ॥

-- सार-बचन संग्रह (5:4:27)

My intellect was topsy-turvy, the Master set right my soul. (Saar Bachan)

Paltu Sahib has shown his humility in a peculiar manner:

दूसर पलटू इक रहा भक्ति दर्ई तेहि जान ॥

भक्ति दर्ई तेहि जान नाम पर पकर्यो मोकहँ ॥

गिरा परा धन पाय छिपायौं मैं ले ओकहँ ॥

लिखा रहा कुछ आन कर्म में दीन्हा आनै ॥

जानौ महीं अकेल कोऊ दूसर नहिं जानै ॥

पाछे भा फिर चेत देय पर नाहीं लीन्हा ॥

आखिर बड़े की चूक जोई निकसा सोइ कीन्हा ॥

पलटू मैं पापी बड़ा भूल गया भगवान ॥

दूसर पलटू इक रहा भक्ति दर्ई तेहि जान ॥

-- पलटू साहिब की बाणी भाग-1 (कुण्डली 164, पृ० 64)

There was another Paltu. I was mistaken for him and given devotion. Devotion was given to me by mistaking me for another of my name. I took the wealth meant for another and secreted it. It was fated for another but was given to me. I alone know it, nobody else does. I offered to return it, but it was not accepted.

This was a mistake by the Great One; what He said I did O Paltu! You are a great sinner and the Lord committed a mistake. There was another Paltu. I was mistaken for him and given devotion.

The humility of Tulsi Sahib appears from the following verses:

मैं मतिहीन दीन दिल दीन्हा। संत सरन सतगुरु को चीन्हा ॥
 सतगुरु अगम सिंध सुखदाई। जिन सत राह रीति दरसाई ॥
 पुनि पुनि चरन कँवल सिर नाऊँ। दीन होइ संतन गति गाऊँ ॥
 दीन जानि दीन्ही मोहिं आँखी। मैं पुनि चरन सरन गहि भाखी ॥
 मैं तौ चरन भाव चित चेरा। मोहिं अति अधम जानि कै हेरा ॥
 मैं तौ प्रति प्रति दास तुम्हारा। संत बिना कोइ पावै न पारा ॥
 संत दयाल कृपा सुखदाई। तुम्हारी सरन अधम तरि जाई ॥
 आदि न अंत संत बिन कोई। तुलसी तुच्छ सरन में सोई ॥
 जो कहु करहिं करहिं सोइ संता। संत बिना नहिं पावै पंथा ॥

-- घट रामायण भाग-1 (पृ० 9)

I am unwise, helpless and of humble heart. By taking refuge in the Saints, I have recognized the Master.

The Master is an unfathomable ocean of peace. He put me on the right path.

I bow at His feet again and again. I humbly sing the praises of the Saints.

I am Thy slave with the whole of my mind. Considering me low, you have found me.

I am your slave forever and forever. No one can cross without a Saint. Saints are merciful and compassionate. By taking refuge with them even the low caste swim across.

There can be no beginning or end without a Saint. Tulsi the helpless has taken shelter with you.

Whatever is done, is done by Saints. Without the Saints, the path cannot be found.

Shams-i-Tabrez expresses his helplessness and inability with humility. He says,

शम्स तब्रेजी हमा दरयाए—फज़ल—ओ—रहमत अस्त,
 लेक जाने—तिश्ना जां दरयाए मी सैराब नीस्त।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 56)

O Master! I am a lame and humble beggar. I have not as yet been able to quench the thirst of my longing soul to my satisfaction by

drinking the intoxicating water of the river of your compassion and mercy.

लंग ओ फ़कीरम तू जि याकूत ख़ेश, वक्ते-ज़कातस्त मरा दिह ज़कात ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 69)

I have come to the door of the perfect spiritual healer for treatment. A healer treats the patient through mercy. Now is the time for giving bounty. Give me some out of your treasury.

तू निको दानी किह हर चीज़ अज़ कुजास्त ।

गर ख़ताए रपत आं बर मा मगीर ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 154)

You know my deeds full well. My weaknesses and helplessness are before you. When I committed any fault, I was helpless. After all, I was ill.

गीरम किह हस्तम ख़ार बद, ख़ार अज़ दरख़ते-गुल दमद,

सराफ़ दाना मी नहद जौ बर सरे-मिशकालहा ।

-- दीवाने-शम्स तब्रेज़ (पृ० 2)

No doubt, I am a thorn but a thorn also grows on flower plants. An intelligent gold dealer uses grain of barley also with mashas to make up tolas (weights for weighing gold).

Give a place to this unworthy being in Your Court although I am not fit for it.

हम गर नहीं लाइक दरबार तुम्हारे,

कहलाते तो हैं बन्दा ए सरकार तुम्हारे ।

We are not fit for Your Court, but we are called Your slaves.

The Results of Humility

The Lord is always present in person with those who pray in humility and with meekness. They play in the ocean of the Lord, like fishes in water. The Lord is immanent in land and sea. If there is humility in heart, the Lord meets up openly.

जल थल जीव जिते तिते, रहे सकल भरपूर ।

जो दिल आवै दीनता, साँई मिले हज़ूर ।।

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (दीनता को अंग 6, पृ० 434)

He pervades land and sea everywhere. If there is humility in heart, He meets openly.

दीन गरीबी बंदगी, साधुन सों आधीन।
ताके संग में यों रहूँ, ज्यों पानी संग मीन॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दीनता का अंग 1, पृ० 49)

He who observes humility, poverty and praying, the Lord is with him like fish in water.

The Lord is like a piece of candy, which pervades you. Only an ant can pick up sugar from the sand, no elephant can do so. Similarly persons, who are proud of caste, race or family, cannot gain any virtue or learn any lesson from the creation of the Lord. Only a humble person can derive this benefit. Kabir Sahib says,

हरि भइओ खांडु रेतु महि बिखरिओ हसंती चुनिओ न जाई॥
कहि कबीर कुल जाति पांति तजि चीटी होइ चुनि खाई॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकवी भगत कबीर, पृ० 972)

Lord, in the form of sugar spread over the sand, cannot be picked up by an elephant. O Kabir! Give up caste and race, become an ant and pick it and eat it.

Guru Amar Das says that you should give up egoism and become slaves of the Master. Then you will realize the Lord.

दासिन दासु होवै ता हरि पाए विचहु आपु गवाई॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 3, पृ० 600)

He who is slave of the slaves of the Lord finds the Lord after giving up egoism.

Guru Arjan, the very source of humility says,

गरीबी गदा हमारी॥ खंन सगल रेनु छारी॥
इसु आगै को न टिकै वेकारी॥ गुर पूरे एह गल सारी॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 628)

Poverty is our mace and becoming dust of all is our sword. These are our chief weapons of defence. No evil-minded person can stand against them. The Perfect Guru has given me this understanding.

He who considers himself humble, is really very noble. He whose mind has become dust of all, recognizes the Name of the Lord in every heart.

आपस कउ जो जाणै नीचा॥ सोऊ गनीऐ सभ ते ऊचा॥

जा का मनु होइ सगल की रीना॥ हरि हरि नामु तिनि घटि घटि चीना॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 266)

*He who knows himself to be low, he is to be counted as highest.
He whose mind is the dust of all, he recognizes the Name of Hari
(God) in all hearts.*

The Lord, in His Grace, makes poverty dwell in his heart. His mind becomes humble. He is always happy. He enjoys bliss. He is not happy, if the world lauds him, nor unhappy if it speaks ill of him. He is a redeemed soul and obtains bliss in the Court of the Lord hereafter. Guru Arjan says,

होहु रेन तू सगल की मेरे मन तउ अनद मंगल सुखु पाईऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 614)

*O my mind, become the dust of all so that you may have bliss,
happiness and joy.*

करि किरपा जिस कै हिरदै गरीबी बसावै ॥

नानक ईहा मुकतु आगै सुखु पावै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 278)

*He in whose mind dwells poverty, by His Grace, is emancipated
here and enjoys bliss hereafter, O Nanak.*

सभ की रेनु होइ रहै मनूआ सगले दीसहि मीत पिआरे ॥

सभ मधे रविआ मेरा ठाकुरु दानु देत सभि जीअ सम्हारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 379)

*My mind has become the dust of all, and everyone seems a sweet
friend to me. My Lord and Master pervades in all. He gives His
Gifts to all beings, and cherishes them.*

It is Extremely Difficult to give up Pride

The world is worshipping woman and wealth; their power is increasing. The rich and the poor are equally affected. Their influence affects all walks of life. It is extremely difficult to give them up, but still we come across persons who have done so. It is, however, far more difficult to give up pride and vainglory, partisanship and envy. Those who do so are very few. To give up Maya is difficult, but it is to no purpose if inner pride is not surrendered. Pride has brought about the fall of many great ascetics and destroyed them. If one gives up pride and sets fire to the considerations of vainglory, he then unites with the Name. Kabir says,

कंचन तजना सहज है, सहज त्रिया का नेह ।
 मान बढ़ाई ईरषा, दुरलभ तजनी येह ॥
 माया तजी तो क्या भया, मान तजा नहीं जाय ।
 मान बड़े मुनिवर गले, मान सबन को खाय ॥
 काला मुँह कर मान कर, आदर लावौ आगि ।
 मान बढ़ाई छाड़ि के, रहौ नाम लौ लागि ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (मान और हँगता का अंग 1-3, पृ० 142)

It is easy to give up gold, or the love of woman. It is rare to give up pride, vainglory or envy.

What if one gives up Maya, while pride is there! Pride humbled many ascetics, it devoured them.

Blacken the face of pride and set fire to vainglory. Give up pride and vainglory and unite with Naam.

There is always suffering, where egoism or pride is present. Where there is doubt, there is grief. All these are chronic diseases. Kabir Sahib asks as to how they can be removed.

जहँ आपा तहँ आपदा, जहँ संसय तहँ सोग ।
 कह कबीर कैसे मिटै, चारों दीरघ रोग ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (मान और हँगता का अंग 14, पृ० 143)

There is suffering where there is egoism. There is grief where there is doubt. O Kabir, how can these be cured! They are chronic diseases.

Kabir Sahib further says that by repeating the True Name, the soul becomes happy. Alms-giving or giving of food is charity. To cross the ocean of the world, humility acts as a boat. There is none worse than pride to drown us.

लेने को सतनाम है, देने को अन दान ।
 तरने को आधीनता, बूडन को अभिमान ॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (सुमिरन को अंग 64, पृ० 122)

Take to True Name and give alms - humility to cross and pride to drown.

Guru Arjan teaches us to pray thus:

संतहु इहा बतावहु कारी ॥ जितु हउमै गरबु निवारी ॥
 सरब भूत पारब्रह्मु करि मानिआ होवां सगल रेनारी ॥
 पेखिओ प्रभ जीउ अपुनै संगे चूकै भीति भ्रमारी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 4, पृ० 616)

O Saints! Tell me that which leads to removal of pride, to seeing of Transcendental One in all beings and to becoming the dust of the feet of all. I may see the Lord present in person within me and my doubts may vanish.

Guru Amar Das also says,

मन तूं मत माणु करहि जि हउ किछु जाणदा गुरुमुखि निमाणा होहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 441)

O mind, have no pride of knowing anything; a Gurumukh is humble and modest.

जे लोड़हि चंगा आपणा करि पुंनहु नीचु सदाईरे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 465)

If you yearn for goodness, then perform good deeds and feel humble.

धरि ताराजू तोलीऐ निवै सु गउरा होइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 470)

If in the balance one weighs a thing, that which is heavier, alone touches down.

To consider oneself humble, is for his own good. This humility leads to greatness, just as all bow to the phase of the moon on the second day.

सब तें लघुताई भली, लघुता तें सब होय ।

जस दुतिया की चन्द्रमा, सीस नवै सब कोय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दीनता का अंग 10, पृ० 150)

It is good to be small. Smallness (humility) achieves everything. Just as it is the moon on the second night to which all bow. (Kabir Sahib)

A humble person can see all others, but none notices him. He who can see him, becomes a god from a man.

दीन लंखै मुख सबन को, दीनहि लखै न कोय ।

भली बिचारी दीनता, नरहुँ देवता होय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दीनता का अंग 2, पृ० 149)

The humble one can see all, no one looks at him. He who looks at the humble becomes a god from a man. (Kabir Sahib)

Humility is not weakness. It is such a powerful thing that all the powers of the world have to bow to it. Man conquers himself with pridelessness. No one can defeat a prideless man; as behind his humility is acting the secret power of the Lord. Humility is an ornament of great men. m



DUTIES

(*Dharma* धर्म)

The Ideal of Spiritual Seekers

The aim of a seeker after spirituality should be high. In order to acquire spirituality, one's aim should be high. Unless there is some definite object or aim, it is useless to hope to achieve it. When his aim or object is certain, then every effort brings him nearer to it.

The condition of a common man is like that of a drifting man, who floats in any direction the current takes him. We are floating in the river of traditions of this world. We follow the traditions. We do as our ancestors have done. We waste time in superstitions connected with the body. We never think of wants, other than those of the body. We do not think of the soul or its plight.

It is necessary to give up false beliefs. Adopt right beliefs; follow the right principles; understand the reality. If you do not understand it, inquire about it, so that you may clearly see the place you are to cross and there may be no obstruction in treading the right path. Those who follow a path followed by others, without due consideration, get involved in some superstition.

Their progress stops and they do not get spirituality. It is, therefore, an essential condition of success to keep before you the ideal. Ask of yourself as to what you want to be. What ideal have you set in life?

A large majority of persons are without an ideal, and even if you find a man with an ideal, he would consider the world as the ultimate goal. The seekers after spirituality would be only a few. Have a peep inside yourself. What do you want to be? You ask for spiritual wealth with your

tongue, but wish for other things in your heart. Intellect says that it is good to attain spirituality, but mind is involved in the body and bodily pleasures, and does not wish for anything else. How then can one seemingly engaged in spirituality obtain success?

In the first place, you should have a clear-cut ideal and then a keen desire to attain it. It is only under such condition, that there can be a hope of success, but in order to obtain it, you should lessen your love for wealth, woman and world.

The Religion of Humanity

The man, in whom the desire to know the mystery of life has awakened, has first to be a man. A man should possess the high virtues of a human being; otherwise, he cannot be called a man.

He cannot be man by simply having the form of a man or dressing like a man or behaving like him. There are many human robots, but there are few, who have virtues special to a human being. They are called the top of the creation, because of their human virtues. A man devoid of humanity is worse than an animal. It was owing to these human virtues, that he was considered higher in rank than anybody else and they were asked to worship him. He was, therefore, called His representative. He, who is devoid of human virtues, is really an animal in human form. It is therefore necessary that he should be a man of principles. This should be his ideal. This is the working principle. The highest duty of man is to imbibe human virtues.

What are Duties and how can they be recognized?

The word "Dharma" is from the root "Dhra धृ" which means to adopt or to sustain. The principle which sustains the entire universe and keeps it in equilibrium is Dharma. Some say that earth is resting on the horns of a bull; others say that it is balanced on the head of a snake. Guru Nanak in Jap Ji has explained that all the universe is sustained by

Dharma, which springs out of mercy and is kept in harmony by contentment.

धौलु धरमु दइआ का पूतु ॥ संतोखु थापि रखिआ जिनि सूति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 3)

The mythical bull is Dharma, the son of compassion; this is what patiently holds the earth in its place.

Religious scriptures (Shastras) have enumerated ten organs of Dharma:

क्षमा अहिंसा दया मृदु, सत्य वचन तप दान ।

शील शौच त्रिष्णा विना, धर्मलिंग दश जान ॥

-- सारवतावली (1:1)

Forgiveness, non-violence, mercy, sweetness, truth speaking, austerities and charities, character, purity and contentment, know them to be the ten organs of Dharma.

All creeds have their own principles, but these are common to all. Those who are fond of Name, to them Name is Dharma.

धरम सरब सुख खान जान सभ को हितकारी ॥

Dharma is the treasure of all comforts and benefits all.

That Name sustains all.

नाम के धारे खंड ब्रह्मंड ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमली म० 5, पृ० 284)

The Name sustains all the regions and universes.

The followers of Name are conscious co-workers and understand the Will of the Lord. They, in a way, get connected with Dharma. All these acts are within its sphere, and they are the embodiment of Dharma.

मनै धरम सेती सनबंधु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 3)

The faithful are firmly bound to Dharma.

Hindu Shastras mention four feet of Dharma. Manu Ji says,

चतुष्पात् सकलो धर्मः सत्यं चैव कृते युगे ।

नाधर्मेणागमः कश्चिन् मनुष्यान् प्रति वर्तते ॥

-- मनुस्मृति (1:8)

In the Krita Cycle, Dharma exists in its perfect form, with all its four feet; and so does Truth. No benefit accrues to men by vice.

In the Vishnu Purana, the four feet are stated to be truth, sacrifice (charity, etc.), worship (right conduct, etc.) and remembrance (Sirnran). Ravidas says to the same effect,

सतजुगि सतु तेता जगी दुआपरि पूजाचार ।।

तीनौ जुग तीनौ दिडे कलि केवल नाम अधार ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी बैरागलि भगत रविदास, पृ० 346)

In the Golden Age of Sat Yuga, was Truth; in the Silver Age of Trayta Yuga, charitable feasts; in the Bronze Age of Dwapar Yuga, there was worship. In those three ages, people held to these three ways, but in the Iron Age of Kali Yuga, the Name of the Lord is your only Support. (Ravidas)

Bhai Gurdas also mentions four feet of Dharma:

चारे पैर धरम दे चारि वरन इक वरनु कराइआ ।।

-- भाई गुरदास, वारां गिआन रतनावली (1:23)

The four feet of Dharma are four varnas, but all have become one.

In the Sanskrit dictionary known as Shabda Kosha Abhidhan Chintamani, the four feet of Dharma are described as follows:

The first foot of Dharma is truth. This is so said in Vedas. The second foot is purity, the third foot is mercy and the fourth foot is charity. The Puranas say to the same effect.

Bhai Mani Singh has described Name, charity, bathing and knowledge as four feet of Dharma. Its chief principles are:

- **Name** नाम, the Name of the Lord.

- **Charity** दान: mercy and sacrifice are included in it. To wish well of all with the heart, to forgive all, to consider all wealth as belonging to the Lord and to enjoy it by sharing it with all, is real charity.

- **Bathing** स्नान: it includes worship, right conduct, purification, etc. Cleanliness of body also falls within it. Cleanliness is next to godliness. To rid the mind of evil tendencies (falsehood, killing; deceit, etc.), the intellect of evil thoughts, and reason of doubts, and to still the mind is real purification.

- **Knowledge** ज्ञान: to procure real good. Guru Ram Das says that when the mind gets fixed, all the four feet are achieved by the seeker.

सतजुगि सभु संतोख सरीरा पग चारे धरमु धिआनु जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 4, पृ० 445)

In the Sat Yuga, all were embodiments of contentment and meditation. The Dharma (Religion) then rested upon all four feet.

The comprehensive name for the above virtues is humanity. This is the appearance of the virtues of the Eternal One and His knowledge in the mind, intellect, reason, action and speech in some pure-hearted person, who wishes well of everybody. He, out of grace and compassion, does not mind the faults of the people, lightens their burden of hardships and sufferings and strengthens their souls.

Dharma comprises those deeds, by knowing and rightly performing which, peace in the world and union with the Lord is obtained. Those actions, which benefit either the doers or others, are included in Dharma, but not if they lead to sufferings. The true criterion for recognizing Dharma is also the same. If suffering results from observing Dharma, there is some mistake in understanding it.

In Mahabharata, when Karan destroyed the army of Yudhishtira, there was great panic. Yudhishtira sent for Arjuna and reprimanded him, and spoke ill of his bow. Arjuna placed his hand on his bow. Lord Krishna, who was with him, understood the move. He asked, "Arjuna, what are you going to do?" He said, "I will kill Yudhishtira. He has spoken ill of my bow and I have vowed to kill anyone who does so. Dharma has to be followed." Arjuna said further, "It is the Dharma of a Kshatriya to fulfil his word. I will kill him." Lord Krishna asked, "Would you be happy by killing him?" He said, "No." The Lord said, "Dharma leads to happiness. It is clear that what you are about to do is not Dharma, but the reverse of it. Do not do it."

For worldly progress, our duty consists in so performing the actions, that we remain within the bounds of laws of the caste and society and sustain each other, so that society

may not split asunder. The rules of this path include bodily, family, social, national and political rules.

Similarly, the path of spiritual progress and emancipation has its laws. It comprises pure detachment.

Sant-Mat gives true guidance, both in worldly and spiritual matters, and while strengthening the human virtues, turns his thoughts to his Lord and takes him to Him.

Love is a Human Virtue – Adopt it

Humanity simply means love for the Lord and His creation. Its other name is sympathy or compassion, fellow-feeling or heart-felt attraction. Its proof is that one's heart melts like wax on seeing the suffering of another. The other man's suffering appears to him as his own. He heartens him, feels sympathy for and is attracted to him, and takes steps to remove his sufferings. A man should feel for others and consider their sufferings as his own. Sheikh Sa'adi says that if there are no feelings of kindness, mercy or love, then there is no difference in such a man and the figure of a man on the wall. Both are useless.

चू इन्सान रा नबाशद फज़लो-इहसान,
चिह् फ़र्क अज़ आदमी ता नक्शे-दीवार।

-- सादी, गुलिस्तान (पृ० 223)

If there is no mercy or gratitude in a man, what is the difference between him and a figure on a wall.

Kabir Sahib also says that the man who has no love, is like a graveyard, while living. He is like the bellows of the ironsmith, which breathes even though lifeless.

जा घट प्रेम न संचरै, सो घट जानु मसान।
जैसे खाल लोहार की, साँस लेत बिन प्रान।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (प्रेम का अंग 11, पृ० 46)

The heart without love is like a graveyard; just like the bellows of an ironsmith which breathes though lifeless.

The fire of love being kindled, other virtues and gifts come of themselves.

Love, and all things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6:33)

God is love, and the world exists by love. It is, therefore, the duty of a human being to love. One, who loves, never injures the feelings of others. The thought of injuring anyone's heart is removed in him.

Do not Injure the Feelings of Others – Keep all Happy

In order to tread the path of spirituality, it is necessary to abstain from injuring the feelings of others and to imbibe the virtue of sympathy with others and to hearten them. Injury to the feelings of others produces darkness in the heart, while sympathizing with others and keeping them satisfied fills the heart with light. Injury to feelings of others results in impurity and disfiguration, while sympathy leads to beauty and decoration. One leads to hardening and difficulties, while the other leads to softening and simplicity. Injury to the feelings of others means causing pain to their hearts. This takes three forms:

1. Mental: Control your mind, so that the thought of injuring others does not enter it.

2. Vocal: Keep watch on your tongue, so that it may not utter any improper words. It should not be soiled with impolite or abusive words. Abuse is one, but its reverberations are many. Evil words lead to disputes, disharmony and sufferings. An angry man, in uttering improper words, uses the basest of abuses and wants to win the field, but a Saint admits defeat and keeps silent. Abuses are like live coals and emit smoke of anger, rage and backbiting. One can be called a sadhu, only if he gives them up.

आवत गारी एक है, उलटत होय अनेक ।

कहै कबीर नहिं उलटिये, वही एक की एक ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (उपदेश का अंग 12, पृ० 106)

*The abuse is one when it comes, but many when it reverberates.
O Kabir, if it is not returned, it remains one only.*

गारी ही से ऊपजै, कलह कष्ट औ मीच ।

हारि चलै सो साधु है, लागि मरै सो नीच ॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (गुरुदेव को अंग 36, पृ० 196)

Abuse leads to disputes, sufferings and disharmony. He who admits defeat is a Saint; he who quarrels is mean.

गरि अँगारा क्रोध झल, निंदा धूँआँ होय ।

इन तीनों को परिहरे, साध कहावै सोय ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (क्रोध का अंग 6, पृ० 140)

Abuse is a live coal and anger, deceit and backbiting are smoke. He who remains aloof from them is called a holy man. (Kabir Sahib)

मै खुर ओ मुसहफ़ बसोज़ ओ आतिश अंदर क़अबा ज़न,

साकिने-बुतख़ाना बाश ओ मर्दुम आज़ारी मकुन ।

-- ख़्वाजा हाफ़िज़

Drink wine and burn the carpet. Set fire to the Ka'ba. Become the dweller of the idol house. But give up injuring the feelings of others. (Hafiz)

3. Bodily or Physical: Control the body, so that none of the organs, hands or feet may cause harm to anyone. To cause pain to another man's heart, is violence which is forbidden. He who wounds the heart of others by his words or actions, is a great sinner. A society, tribe, religion or nation, which injures, either openly or secretly, another for gaining its own ends, can be classed as a sinner. Among the various classes, violence in the shape of mutual opposition is taking place. This is so, even in religious institutions. They go on working for or against each other and hurt the feelings of others. Meat-eating is bad, but the religious leaders are in reality man-eaters and drinkers of the blood of the people. They are cutting them to pieces by talking ill of others, calling them parsimonious and other bad names. They are sowing sin at the root of duties (Dharma) and increasing suffering and unrest in the world.

The heart is the true mosque of God. It is the temple of the Lord. Everyone's heart is the Lord's tabernacle. He who causes pain to hearts, strikes and breaks that temple. He who causes pain to others, not only desecrates and ruins the temples of others, but demolishes the temple of his own heart also. The world is like a machine and we are its parts.

Even if one part is injured, the machine cannot run properly. Even if one organ of the body ails, the whole body becomes restless.

The world is like a body, of which we are parts. How can we be happy, if we injure any organ? If one understands this, he does not injure any living being or any other inanimate object, to say nothing of injuring a man. His whole way of thinking, speaking and acting changes. Mind, speech and body are the means of doing both evil and good. A man becomes the doer of evil and good through them. To think ill of others is a sin of the mind. Jealousy, hatred and enmity are evils of the mind. Harsh words, criticism of others, speaking ill of them and abusing them are sins of speech. Wrong actions are sins of the body. These include adultery, killing and violence.

Non-violence is the just duty. Not to hurt the feelings of others by thought, word and action is a good principle. This can only happen, when we have love for the Lord, who pervades all. A seeker after spirituality never hurts the feelings of others, as he believes that all are His creation. On the other hand, he sympathizes with them. Guru Arjan says that he who wants to attain complete happiness should practice truth, and consider the Transcendental One as pervading everywhere. Contemplate on Name, and by becoming dust of all, merge in the Lord.

जिसु सरब सुखा फल लोड़ीअहि सो सचु कमावउ ॥

नेडै देखउ पारब्रह्मु इकु नामु धिआवउ ॥

होइ सगल की रेणुका हरि संगि समावउ ॥

दूखु न देई किसै जीअ पति सिउ घरि जावउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी की वार म० 5, पृ० 322)

He who wants complete happiness, should practice truth, should consider the Transcendental One as being omnipresent, and contemplate on the Name. By becoming dust of all, he merges with the Lord. He does not cause sufferings to anyone and goes to the True Home with honour.

जिसु मनु मानै अभिमानु न ता कउ हिंसा लोभु विसारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग 1, पृ० 1198)

One whose mind is appeased, has no egotistical pride; violence and greed are forgotten.

Guru Nanak says that we should be compassionate to the Lord's creatures, and engage in charity.

दइआ जाणै जीअ की किछु पुंनु दानु करेइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 468)

Showing mercy to other beings, one makes donations to charities.

Kabir says a man should always be kind-hearted and should never be hard-hearted. From ants to elephants, all are creatures of the Lord.

दाया दिल में राखिये, तू क्यों निरदै होय ।

साई के सब जीव हैं, कीड़ी कुंजर सोय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (दया का अंग 2, पृ० 150)

Be kind in heart and never be hard-hearted. All are creatures of God - from ant to elephant.

What is meant by keeping others happy or pleased?

This does not mean that we should follow like a shadow, or should improperly cajole or flatter others. We should have sympathy and compassion for all. Sympathy is nothing, but pleasing others. We should, as far as possible, not think ill of others by speech, act or thought. The vessel of the heart should not be polluted by thinking ill of others. If one has love for the Lord and sympathy and good wishes for His creation, then all thoughts of hatred, jealousy, enmity and stinginess disappear of themselves. The path of the Saints is that of love, and true dharma (duty) is to love all.

To love the Lord and His creatures and not to injure anyone (non-violence) is the duty of man. The learned have included the virtues such as Mercy, Contentment, Forgiveness, Truthfulness, Sweetness, Austerity, Charity, Purity in Dharma. Only a Dharmatma धर्मात्मा (dutiful person) is endowed with these virtues. He is the best among men.

सचु वरतु संतोखु तीरथु गिआनु धिआनु इसनानु ॥

दइआ देवता खिमा जपमाली ते माणस परधान ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग की वार म० 1, पृ० 1245)

He to whom truth is fasting, contentment the sacred place, knowledge and contemplation the baths, compassion the Lord and forgiveness the rosary, is sublime.

Guru Nanak says that the true sacred thread is made of cotton of compassion, thread of contentment, tied in the knot of continence and spun with truth. Such a thread never breaks and is not soiled.

दइआ कपाह संतोखु सूतु जतु गंढी सतु वटु ॥

एहु जनेऊ जीअ का हई त पाडे घतु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 471)

When with compassion as cotton, thread of contentment is spun with twist and tied in knot with continence, such a sacred thread is fit to be put on. O Pandit, wear it.

Those who wear such a thread are really blessed.

Daya दया - Compassion

Compassion means mercy, grace, sympathy or kindness. When on seeing the suffering of a person, one's heart bleeds and he is really sorry for his suffering, then one is said to have compassion. A compassionate person cannot bear the sight of the sufferings of another and shares his misery involuntarily. He tries to alleviate his sufferings by all means and does not feel at ease, till this is done.

The Lord is compassionate. He is described as highly compassionate by the Gurus. He is the sustainer and shows Grace on all.

प्रतिपाल महा दइआल दाना दइआ धारे सभ किसै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 249)

The Cherisher Lord is so very merciful and wise; He is compassionate to all.

The inward-seeking soul realizes the colour of the Lord. The soul is a particle of the Lord.

कहु कबीर इहु राम की अंसु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गोंड भगत कबीर, पृ० 871)

Says Kabir, this (soul) is formed of the same essence as the Lord.

The soul that takes on the hue of the Lord, awakes in the inner soul, and has compassion for all beings and treats all

compassionately. It has a friendly feeling for all, and loves them. It has, therefore, sweet words for them. This is the essential basis of all virtues and desires.

मिटतु नीवी नानका गुण चंगिआईआ ततु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 470)

O Nanak, humility and sweetness are the basis of all virtues.

धौलु धरमु दइआ का पूतु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 3)

Dharma is born from a compassionate heart. That bull of dharma is born of compassion.

Only a compassionate man can be Dharmatma धर्मात्मा (high-souled one). Patience and forgiveness are born of compassion. When there is no compassion, there is no Dharma or forgiveness.

Compassion and Dharma (duty) are strongly inter-connected. As long as there is compassion, godly virtues like dharma, truth, contentment, forgiveness and patience remain. With its disappearance, they also leave and their place is taken by the five robbers, namely: lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Tulsidas says that compassion is the root of Dharma, and pride is the root of all sins. We should not, therefore, give up compassion, until our last breath.

दया धर्म का मूल है, पाप मूल अभिमान ।

तुलसी दया न छोड़िये, जब लग घट में प्राण ॥

-- तुलसीदास

Compassion is the root of Dharma and pride that of sins. O Tulsi! Do not give up compassion till there is no longer breath in the body.

A compassionate person is full of loving compassion and is like a cup full to the brim which spills over. There is no thought of violence in him. Such persons are blessed.

Guru Arjan says that the merit of performing pilgrimage of sixty-eight spots is obtained by showing compassion to living beings. Such purity and merit cannot be earned by charity and pilgrimage. This merit is not gained by all. The boon resulting from compassion, is Grace. That person is blessed, and compassion resides in his heart.

अठसठि तीरथ सगल पुंन जीअ दइआ परवानु ।।

जिस नो देवै दइआ करि सोई पुरखु सुजानु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 136)

Better than the pilgrimage of sixty-eight sacred spots is compassion. He who gets it by His Grace is indeed blessed.

The compassionate person has an aura of bliss about him. He has a shining forehead, kind and merciful eyes and a sympathetic look. He gives his heart to the depressed and suffering persons. His sweet words act like healing showers on thirsty and parched hearts. He can be called a man in the real sense of the term. The living things become happy because of seeing him, and many sins perish. Persons without compassion have human forms, but do not deserve to be called men, as they are ruled by animal passions. Obstinacy, selfishness, cruelty and injustice are a part of their nature, and they are a cause of unrest in the world. Their pastimes and enjoyments become the cause of misery to the living things. Such evil persons consider it an ordinary matter to bleed any number of persons for their selfish ends. They are sinful persons and more venomous than serpents. One is poisoned by merely looking at them, to say nothing of touching them. A serpent stings occasionally, but such cruel, irreligious persons, by their words, wrinkled forehead and gaze, sting those around them hundreds of times, which results in forcible separation of human beings and sundering of united hearts. It is better to keep at a distance from them.

कबीर साकत संगु न कीजीऐ दूरहि जाईऐ भागि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1371)

O Kabir, do not associate with evil ones. Keep away and run from them.

One ought to be very wary in exercising compassion. We sometimes, owing to ignorance, use compassion which becomes cruelty. No farmer sows seed in the ground without mature consideration. If he does otherwise, it is wasted. The same is true of charity also. It is necessary to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving. The results of doing otherwise are before us in the shape of Sadhu Samaj

साधु समाज (societies of ascetics), associations and sacred spots which have become places of irreligion, lust, anger, jealousy and Maya.

नानक नाम चड़दी कला ॥ तेरे भाणे सरबत दा भला ॥

-- गुरु नानक

O Nanak, Glory be to the Lord. Let all prosper within His Will. Peace be unto all the world.

A compassionate person sacrifices his interest to alleviate the suffering of others. He who surrenders his life to the Lord for His service, and that of His creatures, earns eternal true life, and he who tries to save his own life, loses it.

Whosoever shall lose his life, shall save it, whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it. (Bible, Matt. 16:25)

काम क्रोध माइआ मद मतसर ए संपै मो माही ॥

दइआ धरमु अरु गुर की सेवा ए सुपनंतरि नाही ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली भगत कबीर, पृ० 971)

Lust, anger, Maya's wine and jealousy cling to my mind. Compassion, Dharma and Service of Master enter not there even in dreams. (Kabir)

Bhagat Parmanand says that these hypocritical dacoits are filling their bellies by looting others. Those actions which degrade us in the life hereafter are being performed by them. They have not given up violence. They have no compassion for living beings. They enjoy not the company of the holy men and do not accept their ancient teachings.

बाट पारि घरु मूसि बिरानो पेटु भरै अग्राधी ॥

जिहि परलोक जाइ अपकीरति सोई अबिदिआ साधी ॥

हिंसा तउ मन ते नही छूटी जीअ दइआ नही पाली ॥

परमानंद साधसंगति मिलि कथा पुनीत न चाली ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग भगत परमानन्द, पृ० 1253)

By looting the house of others or breaking them down, he fills his own belly. He does that by which he earns a bad name hereafter. Violence has not left his mind and he has no compassion. O Parmanand! He does not enjoy the company of Saints or follow their teachings.

A compassionate person is very anxious in his heart to do good to others, and he wishes well to all, within the Will of the Lord.

The observance of truth, contentment and compassion is the basis of purity. One should efface himself and become the dust of the feet of others. But it is not everyone who can get this wealth. He gets it, who enjoys the Grace of the Transcendental Lord.

सतु संतोखु दइआ कमावै एह करणी सार॥

आपु छोडि सभ होइ रेणा जिसु देइ प्रभु निरंकार॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीशग म० 5, पृ० 51)

Truth, contentment and compassion are the basis of purity. Give up ego and become the dust of others through the Grace of the Transcendental One.

He only can understand this compassion, who considers all living beings as his own self. One can reach this stage only by 'dying while living'. Guru Nanak says such a man receives honours at the door of the Lord. This stage is easily reached by one, who dies while alive.

जीवतु मरै ता सभु किछु सूझै अंतरि जाणै सरब दइआ॥

नानक ता कउ मिलै वडाई आपु पछाणै सरब जीआ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिध गोसति रामकली म० 1, पृ० 940)

He who dies while living receives compassion inside him and knows all. O Nanak! All glory to him. He recognizes himself in all beings.

When one sees the Lord as pervading all, controls the senses, listens to the Melody of Naam, practices contentment and has compassion for all living beings, then his vows are fulfilled.

एकादसी निकटि पेखहु हरि रामु॥ इंद्री बसि करि सुणहु हरि नामु॥

मनि संतोखु सरब जीअ दइआ॥ इन बिधि बरतु संपूरन भइआ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी थिती म० 5, पृ० 299)

When on the day of Ekadashi, one sees the Lord in every direction, when he controls the senses and listens to Lord's Name, when he is content in his mind and showers compassion on all living beings, then, in this way, his vows are fulfilled.

Santosh संतोष - Contentment

Contentment means satisfaction, agreement, being contented with what one has and being satisfied with it. If one does not gain his object, in spite of effort, or succeeds to a very small extent only, and yet remains calm and collected and does not feel troubled in his mind, he is said to have contentment. When one is surrounded by troubles on all sides, is not honoured by anyone, is talked ill of by everyone, and is faced with defeat on all sides, but does not feel aggrieved by the thought that others are happy, then it is a sign of contentment. It would however, be a mistake to infer from all this that contentment means idleness or slackness. To seem contented and to grieve in secret and to feel jealous is to show oneself in different colours and to deceive the public. A contented person, on getting nothing even after making efforts, does not blame the Master or the Lord. He tries seriously to accomplish the task. Failure or success leaves him unaffected.

उद्दम करदिआं आवे हार॥ तां जाणो भाणा करतार॥

When one fails in spite of effort, know it to be the Will of the Lord.

Only a contented person can put in ceaseless efforts for serving others. He observes truth, never attempts evil and does good actions and earns merit.

सेव कीती संतोखीई जिन्ही सचो सचु धिआइआ॥

ओन्ही मंदै पैरु न रखिओ करि सुक्रितु धरमु कमाइआ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 2, पृ० 466)

They earn contentment, who sincerely contemplate the truth. They do not place their feet in sin, but do good deeds and live righteously in Dharma.

He is very patient. Even though possessed of respect, prestige and strength, he forgives the faults of others. He feels happy, when others progress and get honour, and has clean intentions. Even on getting honours and glory, he loves others and treats them kindly. Although learned and wise, he respects other learned men and tries to imbibe their virtues as a duty. He is beautiful, but does not indulge in sen-

sual pleasures. He is always patient, modest and scrupulous. Such a person is not only contented, but has other virtues also. He is satisfied with his wife, and considers those older than he as mother, and younger ones as sisters and daughters. He lives on the income earned by him by his own labour. He enjoys his simple fare as a sumptuous dinner, and drinks water as if it were nectar. He is not envious of the good life led by others.

Sheikh Farid says,

रुखी सुखी खाइ कै ठंढा पाणी पीउ ॥

फरीदा देखि पराई चोपड़ी ना तरसाए जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1379)

Take the dry and unbuttered bread and cold water. O Farid!

Tempt not thy mind on seeing buttered bread of others. (Farid)

Umar Khayam also says to the same effect, that one who is getting bread and some space for sitting is not anybody's slave or master. He should be told to be happy, as this much is sufficient.

दर दहर हर आंकिह नीम नाने दारद, वज्र बहरे निशस्त आशियाने दारद ।

नै खादम कस बुवद न मखदमू कसे, गो शाद बजी किह खुश जहाने दारद ।

-- रुबाईयाते-उमर खय्याम (रुबाई, पृ० 37)

In this world, he who has half a bread and has a place to sit, he is not anybody's slave or master. Tell him to be happy, as he has sufficient in this world.

He does not covet the riches of another. He deems it to be dirt. He considers the usurpation of the right of others as poison and ever obeys the wishes of the Master.

हकु पराईआ नानका उसु सूअर उसु गाइ ॥

गुरु पीरु हामा ता भरे जा मुरदारु न खाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 1, पृ० 141)

He considers usurping the rights of another, what eating beef is to Hindus or pork to Muslims. Our Spiritual Guide, stands by us, if we do not eat those carcasses.

These principles of spirituality are the same for all. If he is a follower of Mohammed, he considers the rights of others as pork, and if he is a Hindu, as the beef. Only the

money earned by dharmic (meritorious) actions can lead to happiness, peace, patience and contentment. Money, earned otherwise, leads to ever increasing greed and covetousness.

Guru Arjan says that if a man earns a thousand rupees, he hankers after getting lakhs; he is never satisfied. He is deluded by Maya. He cannot feel satiated by having pleasures. On the other hand, he dies hankering after them. All this running about passes like a dream and he gains nothing. One cannot feel satisfied, except by contentment and is never satiated. He cannot be content, with what he has.

सहस्र खटे लख कउ उठि धावै ॥ त्रिपति न आवै माइआ पाछै पावै ॥

अनिक भोग बिखिआ के करै ॥ नह त्रिपतावै खपि खपि मरै ॥

बिना संतोख नही कोऊ राजै ॥ सुपन मनोरथ ब्रिथे सभ काजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 278)

He earns a thousand and hankers after a lakh. He is not satiated and runs after Maya (delusion).

He enjoys many pleasures. He is not satiated and dies hankering. He cannot be satisfied, except by contentment. All his acts are useless like a dream.

Money, wealth and other paraphernalia are related to body, and do not accompany us. Qarun, who had forty rooms full of gold, and Ravana, who had Lanka of gold, took nothing with them from this world.

मूरखु रावनु किआ ले गइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (भैरों भगत कबीर, पृ० 1158)

What did the foolish Ravana take away with him?

Money earned by sin and injustice leads to suffering. It acts as poison on the person using it. His mind is never at rest and his mind wanders. In course of time, the money is wasted. In fact, it leads to destruction of the wealth already accumulated. Money, earned by evil means, is spent on evil deeds.

The money earned by meritorious deeds leads to happiness here and also hereafter. If one is poor, while doing meritorious deeds and the Lord has given him contentment, he is really rich. A rich man without contentment is a beggar and very poor, for the hunger of such a man would not be

satisfied even if he got all the good things of the world, as none can be satisfied without contentment. His hankering increases every day, just as adding of fuel makes the fire blaze all the more. Guru Arjan says,

बिना संतोख नही कोऊ राजै ॥ सुपन मनोरथ ब्रिथे सभ काजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडरी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 279)

Without contentment, no one can rule. Like the objects in a dream, all one's efforts are in vain.

Contentment is had from Naam. He who gets the jewel of Naam, gets all the treasures. On getting contentment the mind gets all and asks for no other boon.

नाम रतनु जिनि पाइआ दानु ॥ तिसु जन होए सगल निधान ॥

संतोखु आइआ मनि पूरा पाइ ॥ फिरि फिरि मागन काहे जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 891)

The man who gets the boon of the Jewel of Naam, is the most blessed among men. On getting a contented mind, he meets the Lord. Why should he ever go begging again?

All desires vanish on getting the wealth of contentment. Owing to his being desireless, worry disappears and the mind becomes restful. Those, who desire nothing, are real kings.

Wealth, cattle, elephants, horses, jewels and their mines are very valuable, but on getting contentment, seem like dust.

Kabir says,

चाह गई चिंता मिटी, मनुवाँ बेपरवाह ।

जिन को कछू न चाहिये, सोई साहंसाह ॥

गोधन गजधन बाजधन, और रतन धन खान ।

जब आवै संतोष धन, सब धन धूरि समान ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (संतोष का अंग 2,6, पृ० 148)

Desire is gone, worry is ended; mind is carefree. Those who require nothing are kings.

Cows, elephants, horses, jewels and their mines are precious, but, when contentment is got, all this wealth is like dust.

The human body is the best of all. Man should use his reason. He should see as to what he has earned for him-

self, and what he has done for pleasing the Lord and His creation. One should, therefore, put on the garment of effort and try to attain the three ideals. It is, however, necessary to put on one particular virtue, and that is to put on the ring of contentment.

मुंदा संतोखु सरमु पतु झोली धिआन की करहि बिभूति ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० १, पृ० ६)

Make contentment your ear-rings, humility your begging bowl, and meditation the ashes that you apply to your body.

This is necessary so that while trying, he may not become ungrateful or blame the Lord, or he may not slowly wither on getting less than expected or by being a failure, or he may not give up the effort and admit defeat. One should be content with what he gets from his meritorious deeds. One should patiently attend to his duty. He should ward off the attacks of greed and covetousness by the shield of patience, so that, in the end, the drop of the soul may mingle with the ocean of the Lord and become blessed, and may not become dry like a rivulet. Sheikh Farid says that contentment naturally makes a man a true creature of the Lord, and he unites with the Lord and grows into an ocean and does not become separated and a dried canal.

सबरु एहु सुआउ जे तूं बंदा दिडु करहि ॥

वधि थीवहि दरीआउ टुटि न थीवहि वाहड़ा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० १३८४)

It is in the nature of contentment that if one is steadfast, he becomes united and grows into an ocean and does not become separated and a dried canal.

Guru Nanak says,

सत संतोखि रहहु जन भाई ॥ खिमा गहहु सतिगुर सरणार्ई ॥

आतमु चीनि परातमु चीनहु गुर संगति इहु निसतारा हे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु सोलहे म० १, पृ० १०३०)

Those who are truthful and contented, those who are forgiving and take refuge with the Master, they know the self and the inner self. They remain in the company of the Lord and get released.

Again, he says that a contented man attains the truth. He speaks the truth and is dear to the Lord. He is never sep-

arated from Him, and merges into Him through the Master.

सतु संतोखु सदा सचु पलै सचु बोलै पिर भाए ॥

नानक विछुड़ि ना दुखु पाए गुरमति अंकि समाए ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 1, पृ० 764)

He observes truth and contentment and leads a truthful life and speaks the truth. He is dear to Him. O Nanak! He does not become separated and by the Master's Grace merges in the Lord.

सचु मिलै संतोखीआ हरि जपि एकै भाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 18)

Those contended souls who meditate with single-minded love, meet the True Lord.

The contented persons, who have reached this stage, always use sweet words. By mixing and remaining in their company, peace and calm is attained. They are really blessed, who come across such persons.

साध संतोषी सर्बदा, निरमल जा के बैन ।

ता के दरसन परस तें, जिय उपजै सुख चैन ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (संतोष का अंग 1, पृ० 148)

Sweet are the words of the contented holy men; on seeing and touching them, peace and tranquillity reign in the mind.

Kshama क्षमा - Forgiveness

Forgiveness means to forgive the faults of others, and to have no thought of it in the mind thereafter. Persons without forgiveness, fight each other and exterminate themselves. Millions of persons perish because of lack of this virtue. Guru Nanak says,

खिमा विहूणे खपि गए खूहणि लख असंख ॥

गणत न आवै किउ गणी खपि खपि मुए बिसंख ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली ओंकार म० 1, पृ० 937)

Without forgiveness, so many have perished; their numbers cannot be counted. Bothered and bewildered, countless numbers have died.

A holy man wrote a book. His dog upset the lamp. All the manuscript was burnt. The holy man forgave the dog and

only said, "You do not know the damage caused by you." He then rewrote the entire book.

That man can be embellished with forgiveness, who has a compassionate nature. Unless there is compassion, there can be no forgiveness. By forgiveness, quarrels are resolved and means for removing the suffering are found. A person of forgiving nature is calm, humble, patient and forbearing. Even in the face of great difficulties, he does not give up forgiveness and is always cheerful.

There are two powers in the world. One is justice, and the other, is forgiveness born out of mercy. Justice is good, but that which can be achieved by forgiveness cannot be had by justice. To err is human. It is not at all uncommon for man to err. If errors are to be invariably punished, it would result in extirpation of the erring individuals. How can blood be washed with blood? If we demand justice, it punishes the guilty. The guilty man undergoes the punishment. This, however, does not remove the hatred against the complainant and the spirit of revenge is there. The resolve to take revenge for getting him punished, is very much strengthened. Whenever he passes by the complainant, the mental desire to take revenge always springs. He gets no rest, until he avenges him. This leads to retribution by the other side. The dispute thus increases, justice cannot remove the thought of ill-will and revenge. But if we forgive any person out of kindness and mercy, it has great effect. The dispute is settled. The thought of revenge does not arise.

On the other hand, the person forgiven feels grateful to the person forgiving him, and has a feeling of friendship for him. The feelings of inflicting punishment and taking revenge are spreading unrest, uneasiness and disorder in the world. The reaction correspond to the thoughts sent out, and they would affect us accordingly. If you send out currents of love you will get those of love as reaction. If you have thoughts of hatred against anyone, you will get the same in return. Actions beget reactions. If you propagate thoughts of love, you will get the fruits of love. If you sow thorns only,

thorns will grow. Do not expect grapes if you sow thorns. Practice forgiveness, and people will forgive you. You reap what you sow. To hope for silk, after giving wool for being spun, is useless.

फरीदा लोड़ै दाख बिजउरीआं किकरि बीजै जटु ॥

हंढै उंन कताइदा पैधा लोड़ै पटु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1379)

O Farid! How can you expect grapes after sowing thorns; how can silk be the product of spinning wool? (Farid)

If we do not think ill of anyone, our love will be universal. When we forgive the guilty and do not wish them ill, we will have no enemy. A forgiving person is always happy. It is impossible to describe happiness, calmness of mind and peace, which results from forgiveness.

It is only a brave man who can forgive. This is beyond the power of a weak man. The Lord is kind and compassionate. Where there is compassion, there the power to forgive can arise. For this reason, the great Saint Kabir has assigned a very high position to forgiveness. He goes to the extent of saying that the Lord Himself dwells in a forgiving person. Where there is forgiveness, the Lord is there in the form of mercy.

कबीरा जहा गिआनु तह धरमु है जहा झूठु तह पापु ॥

जहा लोभु तह कालु है जहा खिमा तह आपि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1372)

O Kabir, where there is Gian (spiritual wisdom), there is Dharma (duty); where there is untruth, there is sin. Where there is attachment, there is death; where there is forgiveness, He is there Himself. (Kabir)

Forgiveness has a glorious form. All say that forgiveness is good. He who has no feeling of forgiveness in his heart drowns in the ocean of this world. Kabir Sahib says,

भली भली सब को कहै, भला क्षमा का रूप ।

जा के मन में क्षमा नहीं, सो बूड़े भव कूप ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (क्षमा का अंग 3, पृ० 147)

All say it is good. The form of forgiveness is glorious. He who has no forgiveness in his heart, is drowned in the well of fear.

By adopting forgiveness, one gets contentment. A forgiving person is not attacked by disease and he is not afraid of death. He gathers the wealth of truth through forgiveness.

खिमा गही ब्रतु सील संतोखं ॥ रोगु न बिआपै ना जम दोखं ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी म० 1, पृ० 223)

Forgiveness includes fast, good conduct and contentment. He is not attacked by disease and is not afraid of death.

Forgiveness extinguishes the fire of anger. There is no other way to calm it. Man remains ignorant of the reality, owing to the veil of egoism. This can be understood on meeting a Perfect Master only. The fire of desires and egoism is extinguished. Anger can be given up by giving place to forgiveness in one's mind by the Grace of the Master. Egoism and anger leave the mind, wherein contentment dwells. Guru Amar Das says,

गुरि मिलिऐ हम कउ सरीर सुधि भई ॥ हउमै त्रिसना सभ अगनि बुझई ॥
बिनसे क्रोध खिमा गहि लई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी म० 3, पृ० 233)

On meeting the Master I have come to know the secret of the body. Egoism and desires are all gone. Anger has disappeared on adopting forgiveness.

An egoistic and angry person loses fear of the Lord. He acts like a reinless camel and commits sins and perpetrates very mean acts. We can learn the lesson of forgiveness from a mother. She does not punish her children for innumerable faults. The greatest merit of a mother is that she does not even think of the faults of her children.

सुतु अपराध करत है जेते ॥ जननी चीति न राखसि तेते ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा भगत कबीर, पृ० 478)

Many faults are committed by the sons. A mother however does not mind them. (Kabir)

The highest embellishment of forgiveness is the divine glory of the Saints and they preach its practice. A forgiving person forgives everything, except breach of duty. It is generally seen that people do not forgive small matters. The spirit of non-forgiveness is the chief cause of unrest in the

world. Forgiveness is most sacred. By practicing it, unrest disappears and man is saved from being burnt in the fire of anger. A man should therefore, always practice forgiveness.

Satya Vachan सत्य वचन - Truthfulness

Satya means Truth — a thing which is eternal and is not perishable. The same meanings have been assigned to it in the Vedas 'that which is not destroyed in the three divisions of time'. By the Gurus, 'Sati' or Satya has been used for a Being, which existed before the beginning of the universe, at its beginning, and will exist forever. It has been used for Sat Purush (Eternal Being). Truth is His quality. God is Truth.

नानक साचे कउ सचु जाणु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 15)

O Nanak, know the True One to be True.

इहु सचु सभना का खसमु है जिसु बखसे सो जनु पावहे॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 3, पृ० 922)

The Truth is the Lord of all. One realizes it by His Grace.

आदि सचु जुगादि सचु॥ है भी सचु नानक होसी भी सचु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 1)

True at the Primal Beginning; True Throughout the Ages; True here and now. O Nanak, forever and ever True.

All our efforts are incomplete without truth. Truth is the crown of all. This is the secret of all practices. All other worship is mere hypocrisy.

मनहठ बुधी केतीआ केते बेद बीचार॥

केते बंधन जीअ के गुरमुखि मोख दुआर॥

सचहु ओरै सभु को उपरि सचु आचारु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 62)

There are so many stubborn-minded intelligent people, and so many who contemplate the Vedas. There are so many entanglements for the soul. Only by becoming Gurumukh do we find the Gate of Liberation.

हिरदै सचु एह करणी सारु॥ होरु सभु पाखंडु पूज खुआरु॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (प्रभाती 1, पृ० 1343)

Enshrine the True One in your heart; this is the most excellent action. All other hypocritical actions and devotions only bring about ruin.

To have a truthful life, is the goal of human life. Truth is everywhere. It should be separated from untruth and experienced inside. The heart wherein it dwells also takes its form. God is Truth. One should be truthful in His eyes, as He loves truth. It does not matter what religion you follow.

साई से साचा रहौ, साई साच सुहाय ।

भावै लम्बे केस रखु, भावै घोट मुँडाय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साच का अंग 2, पृ० 151)

The Truth is known to the Lord; He loves it. You may keep long hair or be clean shaven. (Kabir)

We have to consider here, as to what is truthful speech, i.e., speech which is made by a truthful person. To describe a thing exactly as seen or heard is truthful speech. Besides speaking the truth, our dealings should also be truthful. We should have truth as our ideal, while thinking and base our conduct on it. In this way, our hearts, thoughts and conduct become truthful. Kabir Sahib says that he, whose attention is true, has right conduct. He is in communion with the Lord all the time.

जा की साची सुरत है, ता का साचा खेल ।

आठ पहर चौंसठ घरी, साई सेती मेल ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साच का अंग 7, पृ० 151)

He who has true attention has right conduct. He is in communion with the Lord at all times. (Kabir)

Such a person, in a way, becomes related to truth. Whatever he says, comes out to be true. He is happy in the enjoyment of bliss of truth, both outside and inside. Owing to leading a truthful life, he becomes fearless and peaceful, as he is connected with truth, which is eternal and never changing. All the world is happy in having him. By speaking and seeing the truth, his mind and body become true. He preaches truth and is embellished by it. Those who do not observe the truth, are worried. Tulsi Das says,

धरमु न दूसर सत्य समाना । आगम निगम पुरान बखाना ।

-- श्रीरामचरितमानस (2:94:5)

There is no other duty like the truth. This has been so said by the revealed Scriptures and the Puranas.

The opposite of truth is untruth. Not to relate what one has seen or heard or done is called falsehood. A false person is a hypocrite. He looks with his eyes down and has no light on his face. He is always planning and scheming. He is always afraid that his falsehood may be detected. In order to hide one lie, he has recourse to hundreds of them. He loses his peace of mind in scheming all the while. Doubts and suspicions become his second nature. He, accordingly, trusts no one. His relationship with others is based on selfishness. He is not confided in by anyone owing to his conduct, nor does he confide in anyone. Deceit, fraud, hypocrisy and cunning become staple food of his life. His life becomes a burden to the world. If a liar meets a liar, they like each other, but if a liar meets a truthful person, their relationship snaps.

साँचे को साँचा मिलै, अधिका बढ़ै सनेह ।

झूठे को साँचा मिलै, तड़दे टूटै नेह ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (सात का अंग 19, पृ० 152)

When a liar meets another liar their mutual attraction increases. But if a liar meets a truthful man, their relationship snaps. (Kabir Sahib)

Truth is eternal, while untruth is perishable. Mind should always be fixed on an eternal object so that it may never be destroyed and there may be no pangs of separation.

ना ओहु मरै न होवै सोगु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 349)

He never dies, and there is no pang of separation.

Truth can stand on its own legs, but not so the untruth. A truthful man is steady, patient and firm in his determination. An untruthful man falters at every step, and is not steadfast. While the truthful man is fearless and has no qualms or hesitation, an untruthful man is always afraid and never looks anybody in the face. He always hesitates to speak the truth.

He tries to hide the truth. The truthful man is brave and courageous. But the untruthful man is a coward and an idler. A truthful man is free from cares, because of his fearlessness, which produces detachment in attachment. The truthful man gives up flattering, cajoling, theft and secrecy, while these characterize an untruthful person.

From the above, it is clear that a truthful man can succeed in the spiritual field. As truth dwells in him, he speaks the truth. He himself treads the path leading to the Lord, and guides others to it also.

जिस दै अंदरि सचु है सो सचा नामु मुखि सचु अलाए ॥

ओहु हरि मारगि आपि चलदा होरना नो हरि मारगि पाए ॥

-- आदि ब्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 4, पृ० 140)

He in whom the truth dwells, practices Naam truly and speaks the Truth. He himself treads the path of the Lord and guides others on this path.

One who is truthful and contented and speaks the truth is dear to the Lord. He never suffers separation from Him. Truth has nothing to fear. It is not affected by curses, nor can Kaal harm it. When a true devotee meets the Truth (Lord), he merges in It.

सॉचे स्राप न लागई, सॉचे काल न खाय ।

सॉचे को सॉचा मिलै, सॉचे माहिं समाय ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साव का अंग 3, पृ० 151)

The true devotee is not affected by curses or touched by Kaal, when he meets the Truth (Lord); he merges in It. (Kabir Sahib)

The mind of an untruthful man is never calm and is always planning and scheming, lest the reality may become known. Therefore, all his worship and recitation, remembrance, austerity, charity and devotion, knowledge and contemplation pilgrimage and fasts, etc. are wasted, just as seeds do not germinate in barren soil.

Without truth, there can be no remembrance of the Lord and there can be no devotion without awe. If there is a veil between the iron and the touchstone, how can the iron turn into gold? By not describing the fact as it is, the veil between

us and the truth becomes thick and it becomes impossible to realize the truth. The heart of an untruthful person experiences it in a particular manner. The mind wants to represent it in another way. He hides the truth and describes it differently. He indulges in sin secretly and deliberately turns his back on the Lord.

He incurs sin secretly. However, it becomes known to the public and never remains hidden.

लूक करत बिकार बिखड़े प्रभ नेर हू ते नेरिआ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जैतसरी म० 5, पृ० 704)

We sin in secret enormously, but the Lord is nearer than the nearest.

अंतरि बहि कै करम कमावै सो चहु कुंडी जाणीऐ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 2, पृ० 138)

The deeds one commits, while sitting in seclusion, are known far and wide, in all the four directions.

There is no austerity like the truth, and no sin like the untruth. He who has truth in his mind, the Lord Himself dwells in him.

साँच बराबर तप नहीं, झूठ बराबर पाप ।

जा के हिरदे साँच है, ता हिरदे गुरु आप ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साव का अंग 1, पृ० 150)

There is no austerity like the Truth and no sin like the untruth. He who has Truth in his heart, in him dwells the Lord. (Kabir Sahib)

In the beginning truth is bitter, and untruth is sweet like sugar. Truth may be bitter like quinine, but it washes the sins.

सचु सभना होइ दारु पाप कढै धोइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 468)

Truth is the medicine for all; it removes and washes away our sins.

Kabir Sahib says that a truthful trader should deal in truth only.

जो तू साँचा बानिया, साँची हाट लगाय ।

अंदर झाड़ू देइ कै, कूड़ा दूरि बहाय ।।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (साव का अंग 5, पृ० 151)

If you are a truthful trader, trade in truth; sweep within and throw out the untruth.

An untruthful man does not retain consciousness of what he has uttered; hence his falsehood is discovered from his own inconsistent statements. An untruthful man does not remember.

All the Saints and holy men lay emphasis on speaking the truth, performing truthful actions and conduct. Upanishads say,

सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर

-- तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् (10:1)

Speak the truth and live righteously.

In other words, speak the truth and do meritorious deeds. Tulsi Das Ji says,

सत्य वचन आधीनता, परत्रिय मात समान ।

इतनेमें हरि नमिले, तुलसीदास जमान ॥

-- उपदेश रत्नाकर (दोहा 307)

Speak the Truth, be humble and regard the wife of another as mother. If you do not even then realize the Lord, hold me responsible.

Guru Ram Das told Bhai Tirath that the first requisite for redeeming the soul was to speak the truth, and that it was by speaking the truth, that one could realize the eternal Lord.

Sheikh Farid says,

बोलीऐ सचु धरमु झूठु न बोलीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा सेख फरीद, पृ० 488)

Speak the Truth in righteousness, and abjure falsehood.

The merciful Prophet has said,

Never refrain from speaking the Truth even though you may suffer thereby.

To speak the truth is good. But that is good, which leads to the good of others. Narad Ji told Shuk Dev firmly in Mahabharata, that is truth, which is for the good of all beings. That which leads to happiness of others, is truth. Truth is a constituent of Dharma. That is Dharma, which is born of mercy. In speaking the truth, compassionate considerations

should be kept in mind. In fact, truth is that which does not injure the feelings of others. Whatever is uttered, should come from the heart and should not injure anybody's feelings.

Many persons think it right to speak the untruth in politics or to save the life of another or to protect the chastity of a woman. It should, however, be remembered that truth is truth and falsehood is falsehood. Falsehood, however small or spoken for any purpose, is a sin, even though it results in far greater good.

Guru Arjan, therefore, says that one should trust in truth, to gain acceptance in the Court of the Lord.

सचु वापारु करहु वापारी ॥ दरगह निबहै खेप तुमारी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 293)

Deal in the true trade, O trader, and your merchandize shall be safe in the Court of the Lord.

***Mraduta* मृदुता - Sweetness**

By sweetness is meant sociability, civility, broad-mindedness, polite speaking, cheerfulness and forbearance. It is necessary for a beautiful face to have good habits, otherwise the beauty is useless. If there is a beautiful bungalow in a beautiful city, but only owls reside there, what is its beauty? There may be a green tree, but if there are no flowers or fruits on it, then of what use can it be? A gold watch which does not tell time, or a beautiful lamp which does not give light, is of no value. There may be a pucca masonry well, but if there is no water in it, then of what use can it be? Similarly, a man may be very beautiful, and may wear costly clothes, but if he is not social, is not good-mannered, courteous and polite, then he is without human virtues. What makes a man really a man are his sociability and cheerfulness.

The bounties of the Lord are reserved for the person, who greets others with a cheerful heart and an open mind. Hazrat Ali says,

To greet others cheerfully is the first virtue.

If a man is handsome or rich, this concerns himself. If he is social and cheerful, he influences others. If he is always cross and has wrinkles on his brows, nobody wants to see him, to say nothing of meeting him. Sweet speech, full of humility, goes to the bottom of another man's heart, and this is the real glory and embellishment of man.

Shah Farendu was asked as to how he supervised his servants. He replied,

By politeness and forbearance.

He was then asked as to how he solved his difficulties. He replied,

By leniency and kindness.

However serious the difficulty, use politeness, sweetness and melody. It can succeed better than use of the sword or violence. The wound inflicted by a sword heals in course of time, but that caused by a sharp word becomes fresh every time you remember the words. It is, therefore, necessary to watch the speech, so that no harsh words are used. Think before you speak. Even if there is no occasion, ask to be excused, as a matter of courtesy. It tastes sweet to take bitter pills from a cheerful person. It, however, becomes difficult to take even a sweet thing from the hands of a rude man.

Sheikh Sa'adi says,

अगर हंजल खुशी अज दस्ते-खुशरुई बिह अज शीरीनी अज दस्ते-तुशरुई ।

-- सा'दी, गुलिस्तान (पृ० 132)

To eat bitter things from the hands of a cheerful man, is better than to have sweets from the hands of a rude man.

One should not visit a mercurial or rude person. His bad manners would affect you. How badly is a rude man affected by his being grieved? It is better to meet a man cheerfully than to give him treasures. As far as possible, meet persons cheerfully, just as lightning appears to be laughing in the clouds.

खंदा रु बूदन ब अज गंज ओ गौहर बख्शीदन अस्त,

ता तवानी बर्क बूदन अब्रे-नैसां तू मबाश ।

To be cheerful is better than to be given diamonds in charity. As far as possible, be like lightning and not like dark clouds.

We have to spend nothing when speaking sweet words. Their good effect is felt by us first and then by others.

Kind words do not cost anything.

When you meet another person cheerfully, you shower flowers, and the other man becomes full of their scent. Be cheerful like a flower. Whoever would meet you would share your happiness. If you speak to anyone rudely, he would be ready to fight with you. This would lead to no good, but a lot of worry.

We should not be quick-tempered. We should be courteous in our daily behaviour – even to the servants. Whoever comes in contact with you, would be pleased with you. To be courteous on a particular occasion, is called politeness, but when one is always courteous and mild, he is called civil. This virtue is very helpful in spiritual matters.

Only a courteous and cultured man can be called a man; to be otherwise is to be inhuman. The Lord is everywhere, but a man can be seldom seen anywhere. He is seen rarely. Kabir says that outwardly, all human beings seem alike, but become different when we know them – just as a swan and a stork seem alike, but their actions are different. A swan feeds on pearls, but a stork lives on fish. The peacock and the eagle are very beautiful, as far as form is concerned, but the real beauty is inner, which is much superior to that of the body.

Science has proved that coal and diamonds are both carbon, but there is a great difference in their price. Similarly, innumerable persons look like human beings, but are not so in reality. The worth of a thing depends on its quality. If a thing ceases to possess its quality, it ceases to have any worth and becomes valueless. When an electric bulb is fused, it becomes worthless and is of no use. The plant which ceases to flower is uprooted and thrown out. Similarly, a man, who ceases to be social, cheerful and sweet of speech, becomes unfit for spiritual progress. No real benefit can be had from him. A holy man has said:

कागा काको धन हरै, कोयल काको देत ।

मीठा शब्द सुनाय के, जग अपना करि लेत ॥

-- सद्गुरु कबीर का साखी ग्रन्थ (सब्द को अंग 71, पृ० 209)

What wealth can a crow or a cuckoo give! Cuckoo sings sweetly and turns foes into friends.

A man of social habits does not oppose any good work and does not find fault with others. Owing to compassion, he sympathizes with others and never injures the feelings of others. Hafiz says that there are two sure means of being happy. One is to be kind to one's friends, and the other is to love one's enemies.

आसायशे—दो गीती तफ़सीर ई दो हरफ़ अस्त,

बा दोस्तां तलत्तुफ़ बा दुश्मनां मदारा ।

-- दीवाने-हाफ़िज़ (पृ० 33)

There are two means for being happy in the world: kindness to friends and loving treatment of foes.

If you wish to go to paradise, treat the creatures of the Lord with kindness and consideration.

ता बयाबी दर बहिश्ते—अदन जा,

शफ़कते बनुमाए ब ख़लक़े—ख़ुदा ।

If you wish to enter the paradise of Eden, treat the creatures of God with kindness.

Sanyam संयम- Austerity

Austerity is firm resolve to take a particular course of action or to contemplate on the same or to do the same. It means having a firm determination to do some act. Unless there is firm determination, it is not possible to accomplish an act. The key to accomplishing a task lies in a firm will to do it. This is the main principle. Work done without performing austerity is generally not accomplished. If you wish to do an act, do it with a firm resolve and determination. In order to make spiritual progress, seekers have resorted to various austerities and have undergone physical and mental suffering. The object was to purge the mind of lust, anger, attachment, greed and egoism and to realize the Lord, but they got entangled in external practices.

Says Guru Nanak:

अंतरि अगनि न गुर बिनु बूझै बाहरि पूर तापै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु 1, पृ० 1013)

Without the Guru, the fire within is not quenched; and outside, the fire still burns.

Daan दान - Charity

The Lord is bountiful. He is the giver of all blessings. We always pray,

O bountiful Lord, give us.

And He always grants us boons.

आखहि मंगहि देहि देहि दाति करे दातारु ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (जप जी म० 1, पृ० 2)

We pray for boons, and the bountiful Lord grants us boons.

एकु पिता एकस के हम बारिक तू मेरा गुर हाई ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 611)

The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God. You are my Master.

Whatever He is giving, is for all. Whatever we have, others also have a right to it. We should share and enjoy. We all belong to the Lord. If we really become His, then all become our partners and nobody will seem to us to be outside the sphere of the Lord.

सभे साझीवाल सदाइनि तूं किसै न दिसहि बाहरा जीउ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ म० 5, पृ० 97)

All share in Your Grace; none are beyond You.

All human beings are different organs of the Lord, as all spring from the same essence.

बनी आदम आअजाए यक दीगर अन्द,

किह् दर आफ्रीनश जि यक जौहर अन्द ।

-- सांद्दी, गुलिस्तान (पृ० 42)

Human beings are organs of each other, as in the beginning they come from the same stalk.

To share one's hard-earned income with the helpless and the sick and to spend it on the poor, the downtrodden and orphans is called charity. Charity is very necessary for the good of the world. Charity is a meritorious action. By

charity, fragrance and freshness increase, while stinginess leads to stinking. It is like well-water, which remains cool, fresh and sweet, as long as the well is worked. Charity is sharing wealth with the needy and spending it on good works. He who does not spend in charity, wastes his wealth on unfruitful actions. Kabir Sahib has said:

जो जल बाढ़ै नाव में, घर में बाढ़ै दाम ।

दोरु हाथ उलीचिये, यहि सज्जन कौ काम ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (उदारता का अंग 3, पृ० 76)

When water increases in the boat or wealth in the house, to take it out with both the hands is what the wise do.

Dashvandh दशवंध or Dashansh दशांश - Charity of one-tenth Income

Charity shows compassionate and kind disposition. Compassion dwells in the mind of a donor and he is always open-minded. The leaders of all religions have accordingly laid emphasis on charity. According to Muslims, everyone should give a fortieth share of his income in charity. The Sikhs are directed to spend one-tenth of their income in charity. This rule relating to the spending of one-tenth income is very ancient in India. The ancient records recovered in the East from Egypt to Afghanistan show that in the days of Prophet Ibrahim, all nations used to spend one-tenth of their income on charities.

Grotus says that to give one-tenth of the income in charities was a very old tradition. History shows that Arabs and Afghans, Carthaginians, Egyptians, Greeks and Turks were all acquainted with this rule. It appears from the writings of Clement, Avi Cenna, Trevelyan, Cyprian, Jerome and other Christian writers that all ancient people were familiar with it. In the beginning the Jews and the Christians also used to pay one-tenth. The saying was 'Pay one-tenth and become rich'. Historical writings show that traders used to offer one-tenth of their income to the priests, who used to present the same before the Lord.

Saxons used to offer one-tenth of the booty from the captives to the sea-god Neptune as a religious duty. Similarly, Xenophon, when he returned from his Asian conquest, offered one-tenth of the booty to Apollo. Prophet Ibrahim said that the universe belonged to the Lord and proclaimed,

Glory to God the Lord of the Earth and Heavens.

He offered one-tenth of his income to Him. Prophet Jacob also acknowledged God as Lord of all and said,

Whatever you give me, I would offer one-tenth of the same to you.

Jesus said to one of his disciples,

Sell what you have and distribute it among the poor so that you may get treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven.

He again said,

Give food in the name of the Lord so that your go downs may be full of cereals and you may lack nothing.

Kabir Sahib says that charity does not lead to scarcity.

दान दिये धन ना घटै, नदी न घटै नीर ।

अपनी आँखों देखिये, यों कथि कहै कबीर ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (उदारता का अंग 8, पृ० 76)

Wealth is not decreased by giving charity like the water in the river. See it with your eyes open, Kabir has said so. (Kabir Sahib)

He again said that as long as there is this body, go on giving. When this body would not remain, nobody would say 'please give'.

देह धरे का गुन यही, देह देह कटु देह ।

बहुरि न देही पाइये, अब की देह सो देह ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (उदारता का अंग 7, पृ० 76)

This is the advantage of coming in this body that you should give. O Kabir, give as long as you have this body, for you may not again acquire it easily. (Kabir Sahib)

कहै कबीरा देय तू जब लागि तेरी देह ।

देह खेह होइ जायगी, तब कौन कहैगा देह ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (उदारता का अंग 5, पृ० 76)

Go on giving something as long as you have the body. When this body is reduced to dust, no one will ask you to give. (Kabir Sahib)

Guru Nanak says that we can know truth, only if we follow the true teachings. We should show compassion to creatures and share the income earned by meritorious deeds with the poor and the needy.

सचु ता परु जाणीऐ जा सिख सची लेइ ॥

दइआ जाणै जीअ की किछु पुंनु दानु करेइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 468)

Truth can only be known by following true teachings. Have compassion on beings and do some charity.

Seekers after spirituality always do charity. First comes charity by distributing food. The sick and the helpless are treated and are looked after. Widows, orphans and sufferers are assisted in all possible manners. They are assisted by charity and assured of help. They are encouraged by sweet words.

To whom should Charity be given?

Guru Nanak says,

खेतु पछाणै बीजै दानु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 1, पृ० 1411)

Sow the seed of charity in the field after examining it. Perform charity with due caution.

Charity should be given only to such of the needy, the helpless and the orphans, who are not engaged in evil deeds. Serve the hungry and the thirsty. What is the use of giving wealth to those who already have it? To perform charity without due consideration, is like sowing seed in barren land.

Sadhus of various denominations, temples and religious institutions have grown rich. The wealth of religious institutions is being wasted. They are forgetting the Lord because of the riches. It is often seen that they are entangled in sensual pleasures. We see such examples every day. We have, owing to our thoughtlessness, made them millionaires. They find it difficult to manage their affairs. These institutions are full of valuables and jewels, and idlers are enjoying the same. The really needy, orphans and holy men find it difficult to make two ends meet. For this reason Guru Nanak says that

by sowing seed in the barren land, there can be no profit and even the seed is lost.

कलरि खेती बीजीऐ किउ लाहा पावै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 419)

What can we get by sowing seed in the barren land?

By subscribing to institutions, other than the needy, the seeker after spirituality is, in a way, sowing seed in barren land.

The tenth Sikh guru says that if charity is to be given, it should be given to pure men, i.e., society of spiritual seekers. All other charity is false. He says that only service of such persons is acceptable to the Lord. It does not befit us to serve others. Charity given to them is good; no other charity is good. Such charity bears fruit hereafter. It is vainglory to be praised for others charity. My mind, body, head and wealth are all for such persons only.

सेव करी इन ही की भावत अउर की सेव सुहात न जीको ।

दान दयो इनही को भलो अरु आन को दान न लागत नीको ।

आगै फलै इनही को दयो जग मैं जसु अउर दयो सभ फीको ।

मो ग्रहि मै तन ते मन ते सिर लउ धनहै सभ ही इन ही को ।।

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (खालसा महिमा, सवैये 3)

I like to serve them; my mind is not pleased to serve the others. The charities bestowed upon them are really good; those given to others do not appear to be nice. The charities bestowed upon them will bear fruit in future, while those given to others in the world are unsavoury. In my house, my mind, my body, my wealth and even my head everything belongs to them. (Sridasam. org p.716)

Bhai Gurdas also says the same thing:

जगभोग नईवेद लख गुरमुखि मुखि इकु दाणा पाइआ ।।

-- भाई गुरदास, वारां गिआन रतनावली (7:13)

On looking at infinite sweetness of worldly comforts, the Gurmukh puts a single grain in his mouth.

To earn by one's own labour and to share it with the needy leads to acceptance at the door of the Lord. An old man went on pilgrimage to Mecca (Haj). In his dream he

saw two angels. One asked, "How many persons have come for pilgrimage?" The other replied, "Six lakhs." The first one asked, "How many are accepted?" The other said, "None." He, however, said that there was a cobbler in Damascus who did not come, but his Haj was accepted. On inquiry, it was found that he collected the money for Haj, but as his neighbours were hungry he spent the money on them.

Formal worship is of no use. True spirituality consists in earning not only for our own subsistence, but in spending it on others and for spiritual good.

It is related in the traditions of the Prophet, that he with his followers was once journeying in Syria. They reached a village in the evening and all persons who were fasting gathered and the villagers gave them food to break their fast. The Prophet then said that the villagers thus became entitled to the result of their good actions for the day. Giving of wealth to true holy men is real charity. They do not hoard it or spend it on sensual pleasures. They spend it merely for feeding themselves. The rest they distribute among the needy. The rice used in worship is really sugar-coated poison. Bhai Gurdas says,

तिउ धरमसाल दी झाक है विहु खंडु पाजु ॥

-- भाई गुरुदास, वारां गिआन रतनावली (35:12)

Setting one's eye upon the earnings of a religious place is like eating sugar coated poison.

As to who is entitled to receive charity can be known from a holy man only. Give in charity after inquiring from him. They do not covet your wealth, as they have the wealth of Naam. They are carefree. They will distribute the money given by you to the hungry and the thirsty and thus do good to you. You would thus become the cause of making them happy and earn their grace.

धन की सेवा यह है भाई। गुरु सेवा में खर्च कराई ॥

गुरु नहीं भूखा तेरे धन का। उन पै धन है भक्ति नाम का ॥

पर तेरा उपकार करावें। भूखे प्यासे को दिलवावें ॥

उनकी मेहर मुफ्त तू पावे। जो उनको परसन्न करावे॥
उनका खुश होना है भारी। सत्तपुरुष निज किरपा धारी॥

-- सार-बचन छंद बंद (13:1:29-33)

The service of wealth is that it may be spent in service of the Master. The Master does not covet your wealth. He has the wealth of devotion and Naam. He does good to you and has it distributed to the hungry and the thirsty. You get his grace without effort by making Him happy. His being pleased is very good. The Lord Himself showers His grace. (Swami Ji Maharaj)

The world can be helped by several kinds of charities. In the first place, it is of wealth, food, clothes, etc., which has been described above. In the second place, it is mental. It is to wish well of others and to pray for the welfare and happiness of your enemies.

नानक नाम चड़दी कला॥ तेरे भाणे सरबत दा भला॥

O Nanak, glory be to the Lord. May all live well within His Will.

In the third place, it is charity of intellect, such as teaching the illiterate. The highest form of charity is soul charity or giving of Naam. This can be done by Gurumukhs and Mahatmas only. They do not accept any consideration for the same, and are happy in giving it. They confer a great boon on the world, but do not even mention it. They give life and persuade persons to engage in devotion. These Gurumukhs help millions by making a gift of the ray of Naam.

जीअ दानु दे भगती लाइनि हरि सिउ लैनि मिलाए॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 5, पृ० 749)

They give life, persuade persons to engage in devotion, and unite them with the Lord.

गुरमुखि कोटि उधारदा भाई दे नावै एक कणी॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 608)

Blessing them with even a speck of the Name, the Gurumukh saves millions of people, O Siblings of Destiny,

They consider that all belongs to the Lord. They devote money and wealth, palaces and houses, sons and daughters, relations and friends, body and mind, intellect and reason, to

the service of the Lord. The Lord is bountiful. The holy man gets identified with Him, and it becomes his habit to give His boons in charity. He considers it his duty to do so. He does not consider that anything belongs to him. He offers his all to the Lord. His inner condition becomes, as is depicted by Kabir Sahib.

कबीर मेरा मुझ महि किछु नही जो किछु है सो तेरा ॥

तेरा तुझ कउ सउपते किआ लागै मेरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1375)

O Kabir, nothing belongs to me, all is Yours. In giving You what is Yours, I lose nothing. (Kabir)

Shauch शौच - Hygiene

Shauch means purity or hygiene or cleanliness. This is also an essential part of religious duty. It is of two kinds, internal and external. The physical body, house, clothes, etc., are of the second category, and purity of mind and the senses is of the first category. External cleanliness is essential for internal purity, and has a very considerable influence over it. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Both internal and external purity is essential. The cleanliness of body, clothes and house is very necessary for bodily health. It can be done by a daily bath, by brushing the teeth, cleaning the clothes with soap and water, and by living in an open and sunny place and using phenyl and water. The body is full of many pores, through which perspiration comes out and the outer atmosphere affects the body through them. One must keep them clean and healthy. This is achieved by taking laxatives, keeping fasts and regulation of diet. Pure food is very necessary. Inner purification can be had by purity of the mind and senses, i.e., by attaining the truth or practice of Naam and Shabd.

For perfect purity, clean conduct, pure food and good character are very necessary.

Shuddha Vyavahar शुद्ध व्यवहार - Good Conduct of Life

It is absolutely necessary for meditation that one earns one's own living honestly or by one's own labour. Only such persons can worship, whose earnings are honest. Bu-Ali Qalandar says that for meditation, one should eat honestly earned food so that he may not have any grief or trouble.

बहरे-ताअत लुकमाए बायद हलाल, ता नेअफजायद तुरा रंजो-मलाल ।

-- मसनवी बू-अली शाह कलन्दर (पृ० 17)

For meditation, take food which is honestly earned so that your grief and suffering may not increase.

Honestly earned food produces a peculiar light in us, by which knowledge and intellect are sharpened and love as well as humility are awakened. If by eating something, one has a feeling of envy or enmity or one does not remember God or his intellect is dulled, then it is a clear sign of the food having been earned by dishonest means. Food is like a seed. As the seeds are impure or pure, their fruits will produce bad or good thoughts in our minds. By intake of food earned both by hard labour and by honest means, we shall be inclined to contemplate and remember the Lord. By eating hard-earned bread, we begin to imbibe good virtues. God has given us hands and feet. We should earn our food by their proper use. We must not covet or desire the wealth of others.

To beg is to be under obligation and to depend on others. Be content with whatever you get. Do not depend on anyone. Do not be tempted by the luxurious living of others.

रुखी सुखी खाइ कै ठंढा पाणी पीउ ॥

फरीदा देखि पराई चोपड़ी ना तरसाए जीउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1379)

Take the dry and unbuttered bread and cold water. O Farid, do not be tempted by buttered bread of others. (Farid)

If our food is simple, we shall have fewer wants. When a person looks to others for his living, he does not remain independent, but becomes a slave of others and indulges in undue flattery. By not using his hands, feet, brain and ears, he becomes incapacitated. He is also affected by the food earned

by others. If it is by means other than fair, his thoughts and his mind will be similarly affected. Maulana Rum says,

ऐ खुरंदा खूने-खलक अज रह बगर्द, ता नयारद खूने-ईशानत नबर्द ।

माले-ईशां खूने-ईशां दां यकीं, जांकिह माल अज जोर आयद दर यमीं ।

-- मसनवी मौलाना रूमी (दफ़तर 3, पृ० 29)

Do not take food at the table of others or without payment so that their blood might not affect you. The food of others, if it is obtained by force or injustice, is like blood.

Turn away from living on the public so that you may not be affected by their blood. Consider this food to be their blood, because it is obtained by force.

Guru Nanak says that a piece of cloth, besmeared with blood, is considered to be impure. There are bloodsuckers, who grow fat by unfair means and amass wealth by seizing the rights of others. The earnings of such persons are full of the blood and sighs of others. How can anybody's mind remain pure by eating their food! God's Name should come out of pure minds and good tongues. But none can be successful on the path of God by eating such foods.

जे रतु लगै कपड़ै जामा होइ पलीतु ॥

जो रतु पीवहि माणसा तिन किउ निरमलु चीतु ॥

नानक नाउ खुदाइ का दिलि हछै मुखि लेहु ॥

अवरि दिवाजे दुनी के झूठे अमल करेहु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (माझ की वार म० 1, पृ० 140)

If a cloth is blood-stained, it becomes impure, how can the consciousness of those who suck blood remain pure? O Nanak, chant the Name of God with heart-felt devotion. All else is just a pompous worldly show, and the practice of false deeds.

Guru Nanak, it is said, refused to accept an invitation to dinner by a wealthy and influential governor, named Malik Bhago. He, however, accepted and ate the coarse food offered by a poor carpenter named Lalo. Malik was very angry. He called Guru Nanak and asked the reason for such an insult. Guru Nanak told him that his wealth had been accumulated by sucking the blood of the poor, whereas Lalo's earning was based on meritorious deeds. Food

prepared out of such wealth, that has been earned by fair means is full of milk, even if it is coarse and stale. But food prepared out of unfair means is full of blood. He squeezed the two pieces of bread with his two hands. Blood oozed out of one and milk out of the other.

Money is essential for honest living. Guru Har Gobind once went to Gujarat with his wife. People made fun of him saying that asceticism was not compatible with riches. Guru Sahib said that money is necessary for living, whether one is a beggar or a rich man. To conceal one's riches and to show oneself as a detached person, is to deceive the world. If one depends upon others through his lazy habits, he too deserves condemnation. Saints have always taught that one should earn one's own livelihood. Such earnings help others, while meditation on God's Name for a period of time, is one's own earning. If a Sadhu subsists on others, he should not take more than his wants and meditate for five or six hours, as it is necessary, to pay back the debt of the sustainer. It is necessary to earn money for one's living by fair means. Money earned by foul means is really not wealth, but blood of others. Earning by fair means is like milk. A beggar who provides food to his children by begging cannot achieve any success on the spiritual path. This principle applies equally to all, whether one is a householder or a Sadhu. To eat the leavings of another, is like poison. This should be avoided. The tenth Guru had received large offerings amounting to Rs. two lakhs (two hundred-thousand), but he did not take a piece out of it for his own use in spite of heavy needs on account of many adverse circumstances, but threw it in the river and raised fresh funds for war needs. On inquiry as to why he had done so, he said that it consisted of offerings and was like poison. No mother gives poison to her children, he said.

All Saints were against begging. Guru Nanak says that one should be ashamed of begging at the door of others. When the Transcendental One pervades everywhere, why should one beg?

घरि घरि मागत लाज न लागै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 1, पृ० 903)

You beg from door to door, and even then don't feel ashamed.

निरंकारि जो रहै समाइ ॥ काहे भीखिआ मंगणि जाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली की वार म० 1, पृ० 953)

One who remains absorbed in the Formless Lord – why should he go out begging?

Guru Amar Das says that if a yogi moves from house to house as a beggar, how will he justify in the Court of the Lord the account of his actions?

जोगी होवा जगि भवा घरि घरि भीखिआ लेउ ॥

दरगह लेखा मंगीऐ किसु किसु उतरु देउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 3, पृ० 1089)

After becoming a yogi, he wandered all over begging from door to door. When account would be demanded, how would he answer?

Guru Nanak gives a clear warning to the Gurus and Pirs that if a man calls himself a Guru, but goes to his disciples to beg for the maintenance of his children, then we should not bow at his feet. He is far from spirituality. He who earns his own living, and gives to others a share of the same, is fit to understand spirituality.

गुरु पीरु सदाए मंगण जाइ ॥ ता कै मूलि न लगीऐ पाइ ॥

घालि खाइ किछु हथहु देइ ॥ नानक राहु पछाणहि सेइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सारंग की वार म० 1, पृ० 1245)

Don't ever touch his feet of the ne who calls himself a guru or spiritual teacher, while he goes around begging. One who works for what he eats, and gives away some of what he has – O Nanak, he alone knows the Path.

A Sadhu, begging from a householder, loses the nobleness of his position as a Sadhu साधु. A householder, taking the money of another, falls from his principles. If a householder takes money from a Sadhu, he is degraded and it is very difficult to redeem him.

Kabir Sahib was very much against begging. He says that some persons do not meet a Perfect Master, and on listening to incomplete teachings, assume the garb of a yogi

योगी, but beg from door to door. Begging is like dying. One should not beg. This is the teaching of all great Masters. It is better to die than to beg, for when one says, "Please give", the glory of living and respect for life depart. Fellow-feeling and brotherly treatment cease. The glory of this body lies in giving while alive.

पूरा सतगुरु ना मिला, सुनी अघूरी सीख ।

स्वाँग जती का पहिरि के, घर घर माँगे भीख ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-1 (झूठे गुरु का अंग 5, पृ० 13)

Perfect Master is not met, and teachings are imperfectly understood. He puts on the garb of a Yogi and begs from door to door.

माँगन मरन समान है, मति कोइ माँगे भीख ।

माँगन तें मरना भला, यह सतगुरु की सीख ।

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (उपदेश का अंग 18, पृ० 107)

Begging is like dying and no one should beg. It is better to die than to beg. This is the teaching of the True Master.

आब गई आदर गया, नैनन गया सनेह ।

ये तीनों जबही गये, जबहिं कहा कछु देह ॥

-- कबीर साखी संग्रह भाग-2 (लोभ का अंग 5, पृ० 141)

Glory is lost, respect is lost and love is lost. These three are lost the moment a request is made.

Sheikh Farid prays,

फरीदा बारि पराइऐ बैसणा सांई मुझै न देहि ॥

जे तू एवै रखसी जीउ सरीरहु लेहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1380)

O Lord! Do not force me to sit at the door of others. If such be Your will take away my life.

Shuddha Aahaar शुद्ध आहार - **Pure Food**

Three kinds of knowledge are very necessary:

1. knowledge of one's physical body;
2. knowledge of religious duty or moral principles;
3. knowledge of one's soul.

Through the upkeep of the body, we know the methods of maintaining good health. Progress of all kinds – intellectual, physical, religious, spiritual and moral – is possible

only with good health. A sick man cannot engage himself in any religious activity. He will be unable to do anything for his country, to earn his own livelihood, to work for society, community or religion. He cannot even engage himself in his own spiritual upkeep. How then can he realize himself!

Guru Arjan Says,

घटि वसहि चरणारबिंद रसना जपै गुपाल ॥

नानक सो प्रभु सिमरीऐ तिसु देही कउ पालि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़ा म० 5, पृ० 554)

He contemplates on the feet in his heart and repeats the Lord's Name. O Nanak, he remembers the Lord Who looks after his body.

बाबा होरु खाणा खुसी खुआरु ॥

जितु खाधै तनु पीड़ीऐ मन महि चलहि विकार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 16)

O Baba, the pleasure of foods (other than the Ambrosial Nectar) are false. Eating them, the body is ruined, and wickedness and corruption enter the mind.

Food is necessary for health and bodily vigour. And only wholesome food is good, the intake of which does not cause sloth or heaviness. Food that is the cause of pain or inconvenience to the body and raises evil thoughts in the mind is not desirable. Without true Naam, this life is worthless and it is an act of folly to eat and fill the stomach.

सो किउ मनहु विसारीऐ जा के जीअ पराण ॥

तिसु विणु सभु अपवित्रु है जेता पैनणु खाणु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 16)

How can you forget the One who created your soul, and the Prana, the breath of life? Without Him, all that we wear and eat is impure.

फिटु इवेहा जीविआ जितु खाइ वधाइआ पेटु ॥

नानक सचे नाम विणु सभो दुसमनु हेतु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही की वार म० 1, पृ० 790)

Cursed is that life in which one only eats to fill his belly. O Nanak, without the True Name, all one's friends turn to foes.

Guru Ram Das says that such people as have no Guru (Master), eat and lead a life of ignorance. They are not freed from the cycle of birth and death.

जो मनि चिति इकु अराधदे तिन की बरकति खाहि असंख करोड़े ॥

तुधुनो सभ धिआइदी से थाइ पए जो साहिब लोड़े ॥

जो बिनु सतिगुर सेवे खादे पैनदे से मुए मरि जंमे कोड़हे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 4, पृ० 306)

Through their generosity of those who worship and adore the One Lord in their conscious minds, countless others are fed. All meditate upon You, O Lord! but they alone are accepted, who are pleasing to their Lord and Master. Those who eat and dress without serving the True Guru, die; after death, these wretched lepers are consigned to reincarnation.

A spiritually-inclined person eats and sleeps little. His intellect is pure and his body is healthy. His spiritual life and conduct are both benefited.

अलप अहार सुलप सी निंद्रा दया छिमा तन प्रीति ॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (रामकली पातसाही-10, 2)

Eat and sleep little, cherish mercy and forgiveness. (Dasam Granth)

ओन्ही दुनीआ तोड़े बंधना अंनु पाणी थोड़ा खाइआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 2, पृ० 467)

He breaks the bondage of the world, who eats and drinks little.

Food is very necessary for preserving the body. Without it, the body cannot be maintained. Complete benefit can only be derived, if it has been earned by right means. It should be light, easily digestible and taken in such a quantity as does not exceed our needs.

Food can be divided into three kinds: Sattvik सात्त्विक, Rajasik राजसिक, and Tamasik तामसिक. Sattvik food produces pure feelings. Butter, milk, rice, pulses and vegetables come under this category. Food that is full of pungent spices, is hot and has a heating effect on the system is Rajasik. Stale, raw, over-ripe food, eggs, meat, fish, wine, etc., are Tamasik foods. But, even Sattvik food sometimes turns into Tamasik, if taken in excessive quantity.

One should not eat only for taste. We should see that the food which we take, is neither excessive nor insufficient for our body's needs. It should also contain ingredients produc-

ing energy essential for the upkeep of the body and brain. A tasty food taken in excess is harmful.

For brain and mental work, one should eat nuts, fruits, apples, grapes, milk and almonds, etc. For persons engaging in physical labour, butter, carbohydrates, rice, sugar, etc., are necessary. Similarly, strength-giving and bone-forming foods like wheat, pulses, lime, milk, butter, etc. should be taken.

We must have plenty of air, water and carbohydrates. Air is foremost, without which one cannot live. Water comes next. Both are free gifts of nature. Carbohydrates found in cereals are third in importance.

We should eat slightly less than the requirements of our appetite; it is not wise to eat more and then take carminative mixtures. Man is not born to eat, but food is produced for man to eat. Soul is given the status of human life, in order to know and realize God. Only human beings can know Him, and their body cannot subsist without food. Even animals are better than human beings. They eat only when hungry, and not for taste, and their intake is just to satisfy their appetite and no more, in a natural way. If we eat more than is necessary, we not only deprive others of their share, but excessive intake of food is always harmful.

खुरदन बराए जीस्तन व ज़िक्र करदन अस्त,
तू मुअतकिद किह जीस्तन अज बहरे—खुरदन अस्त ।

-- सादी, गुलिस्तान (पृ० 128)

Eating is for living and remembering the Lord. You, however, believe that one lives to eat.

What should we Eat?

Whatever is necessary for man to eat is found in fruits-citrus fruits, bananas, figs, dates, apples, pineapples, almonds, walnuts, groundnuts, coconuts and certain other dry fruits. Some scientists believe that it is not necessary to cook food. Boiling and cooking of vegetables destroy various energy-giving elements. They believe that a vegetable or a

fruit, which cannot be taken without boiling, is actually not our food. Fruits increase mental and physical energy and we do not feel tired of working. After these, come vegetables, pulses and cereals, butter and milk. Wheat is considered to be the best energy producing food among cereals. Wheat flour, ground in hand stone mills and from which bran has not been separated, is beneficial. Mill ground flour is not good. Porridge of wheat or boiled wheat, taken with milk, dried fruits like raisins, etc., and sugar is more strength-giving than other foods. Milk, curd and fresh fruits are good foods. Pulses take long to be digested. They produce a certain acidic poison and should be taken sparingly.

Food for Spiritual Discipline

In the first instance, our conduct of life should be good. Wholesome (Sattvik) food should be prepared from vegetables and cereals purchased out of the hard-earned income acquired by honest means. The person preparing should have wholesome (Sattvik) ideas, and he should repeat and remember God's Name with a peaceful and tranquil mind, while preparing the food. The effect of these measures is reflected in the food, and in those who eat it. By taking such food, there would be peace in their minds and they would readily engage in remembering the Lord.

How many Times and When should the Food be Taken?

Food prepared on Western lines is easily digested in five or six hours, and the Indian food takes a little longer, i.e., seven or eight hours to digest. Doctors consider that children should eat three times – morning, noon and evening, whereas older people should not eat more than twice daily – morning and evening. The evening meal should be taken at least three hours before sleep, in order that a good portion of it is digested by then. One should fill half the stomach with solid food, one-fourth with water, and the remaining portion should be empty. If these simple principles are adhered to,

there will be no ailments in the system. Sheikh Sa'adi says that portion of the stomach, which remains empty will be filled with the Light of God. The physical body becomes fat with food. The soul on the other hand gets more energy with smaller intake of food.

अगर अज़ तआमे—तन आम मीशवद फ़रबा,
तने—करीम अज़ अतआम शवद फ़रवा।

-- शेख़ साराब

Just as from taking food the body grows fat, similarly the soul gains strength from fast.

Harmful Effects of excessive or insufficient Intake of Food

Excessive food, under the temptation of its taste, increases the blood pressure, causes indigestion and many other ailments, viz. pain in the joints, constipation, headache and bitter taste in the mouth, slothfulness, etc.

बहु सादहु दूखु परापति होवै ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु म० 1, पृ० 1034)

For one's excessive indulgences, one receives only pain.

अधिक सुआद रोग अधिकाई बिनु गुर सहजु न पाइआ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 1, पृ० 1255)

The more he panders to taste, the more he is diseased; without the Guru, there is no placidity.

Meagre taking of food leads to loss of weight, blood insufficiency, prostration, faulty working of the lungs, low fever, restlessness, fear, coma and ultimately death.

Secret of Good Health and Long Life

Do not eat in haste, it produces indigestion. If food is chewed slowly, it is acted upon by saliva in the mouth. In haste, the secretion is not mixed and the stomach cannot easily digest it. Therefore, chew it completely, and it should go down the throat as liquid. Mr. Gladstone assigned his long life to slow eating and chewing each morsel thirty-two times. If the food is eaten thus, dyspepsia is cured and even a small quantity is very beneficial.

Do not load your stomach too much. This leads to indigestion.

Do not eat either too cold or too hot food. This disturbs the stomach and leads to indigestion.

Fast twice each month. But one, whose evening meal is light, simple and small, need not fast.

Always have regular times for food, and it should be eaten in a happy and care-free mood.

Necessary Precautions in taking Food

Late morning meals and excessive dinners are harmful. Avoid them. They produce stomach troubles, disturbed sleep, bad dreams and pains. As far as possible, finish your dinner before sunset.

Drink water slowly two or three hours after food. Do not try to swallow food with the aid of water and without proper chewing.

Secret of the Health of Saints and Great Men

We find from the life history of great men that their longevity was primarily due to simple and spare fare.

Kabir Sahib used to eat mainly rice and pulse cooked together.

कबीर खूबु खाना खीचरी जा महि अंमृतु लोनु ॥

हेरा रोटी कारने गला कटावै कउनु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक भगत कबीर, पृ० 1374)

O Kabir, the meal of beans and rice is excellent, if it is flavoured with salt. Who would cut his throat, to have meat with his bread? (Kabir)

Hazrat Mohammed's main food was barley.

General Booth of the Salvation Army lived to the age of 83 years and was always healthy. He writes,

I have not eaten fish, meat or chicken for the past many years. My food mainly consists of butter, cheese, vegetables and cereals. I eat fruit also. I drink warm milk. I abstain from intoxicating and coloured drinks. I do not smoke.

The simpler the life and food, the sooner the stomach digests the food and gets rid of it. The heart is fresh and the brain is clear. Body would be alert, and would not feel tired from work. Plain living and high thinking pays.

Sheel शील - Good Conduct

Sheel means noble ideas and noble character. It includes purity of thought, word and action. A person, who has good character, has control over his sense organs. He remains unperturbed, even in the midst of sensual surrounding. He is highly steadfast and has a good and noble nature. Mind enjoys the various sense pleasures through the five senses of perception and the five organs of action. To turn the senses away from the worldly pleasures and to look within, helps on the path of spirituality. The Gurus say:

दस इंद्रि करि राखै वासि ॥ ता कै आत्मै होइ परगासु ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गुडडी म० 5, पृ० 236)

He who controls the ten senses, his soul gets Enlightened.

All these senses derive pleasure through the physical organs. The temptations or pleasures are all external. They cannot satiate the mind or the senses. One who is entangled in them, takes to the wheel of births and deaths. Good character leads to success in life and it is very necessary for spiritual gains. It is the stepping-stone to spirituality. Therefore, all Saints have laid great emphasis on this. The tenth Sikh Guru has emphatically stressed the need of purity of mind and character in order to cross the three attributes (Gunas).

सील संतोख सदा निरबाहिबो हवैबो त्रिगुण अतीति ॥

-- दसम ग्रन्थ (रामकली पातशाही-10, 2)

By observing good character and contentment, one crosses the three Gunas (attributes). (Sridasam.org p.709)

The main and principal part of pure character consists of a life of continence, which means the purity of mind, word and deed. It does not simply mean control of sex organs. It comprises control over all sense organs. This is essential in all walks of life. For spiritual gains, however, it is

especially necessary. It includes good conduct and pure character. All great men became great through their lofty character. Brahmacharya ब्रह्मचर्य (continence) is a code of conduct by which we can realize God. One should not, therefore, go astray from it.

A man of good character becomes a fortunate man. Right conduct is a science dealing with character, good manners and human conduct. Right conduct is a science. It may be called the philosophy of human behaviour. By this, one deals with others. Manu says,

आचारः परमो धर्मः श्रुत्योक्तः स्मार्त एव च ।
तस्मादस्मिन् सदा युक्तो नित्यं स्यादात्मवान् द्विजः ॥
आचाराद् विच्युतो विप्रो न वेदफलमश्नुते ।
आचारेण तु संयुक्तः सम्पूर्णफलभाग् भवेत् ॥
एवमाचारतो दृष्ट्वा धर्मस्य मुनयो गतिम् ।
सर्वस्य तपसो मूलमाचारं जगहुः परम् ॥

-- मनुस्मृति (1:108-110)

Morality [Right Behaviour] is highest Dharma; that which is prescribed in the Shruti and laid down in the Smṛti. Hence the twice-born person, desiring the welfare of his soul, should be always intent upon Right Behaviour.

The Brāhmaṇa who departs from Right Behaviour, does not obtain the fruit of the Veda; he however who is equipped with Right Behaviour obtains the full reward.

Having thus seen that virtue is got at from Right Behaviour, the sages regarded Right Behaviour as the very root of all Austerity.

On finding that the path of duty (Dharma) arises from character, Manu describes it as the basis of all austerities and recommends its adoption.

The first duty of a Brahmachari ब्रह्मचारी (continent person) is to be of right conduct. It means self-discipline and to have good character.

Virtue, truth, meritorious deeds, power and success all spring from good moral character. Mahabharata says that the sign of good religion is good moral character; it is also the sign of virtue. Its observance results in Dharma. The life

is prolonged and a person is happy. It brings a good name in this life and hereafter. A person who is the friend of all and wishes the good of all living beings by his thoughts, words and actions, truly knows his religious duty.

Religion is a very intricate and difficult subject. Through religion, one achieves wealth, bliss and salvation. By religion, people generally mean good deeds. A deed which leads to emancipation and to salvation, which means the good of another and which does not lead to the harming of any living being, is true Dharma. Good moral character beautifies virtue. The deeds of virtuous and religious persons are the signposts of goodness.

A seeker inquired from Rishi Veda Vyasa,
I am in a great fix. I have not been able to understand the meaning of Dharma. People try to put different meanings. Kindly explain to me its meaning in simple language, so that I may do my duty in accordance with its precepts.

The Rishi replied,

न तत्परस्य संदद्यात्प्रतिकूलं यदात्मनः ।
 एष संक्षेपतो धर्मः कामादन्यः प्रवर्तते ॥
 प्रत्यसख्याने च दाने च सुखदुःखे प्रियाप्रिये ।
 आत्मौपम्येन पुरुषः समाधिमधिगच्छति ॥

-- महाभारत (XIII:44: 8-9)

This is the summation of Dharma: "Do not commit unto others that is untoward to oneself" – this is Dharma in short; all other kinds of acts are impelled by desires.

By treating others on par with oneself – in speech, giving, happiness-sorrow, and likes-dislikes – a person attains the peace of mind.

This has been summed up by our Sri Krishna too, using the same term — *ātmaupamya* (like oneself) in his Gita:

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
 सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

-- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (6:32)

Arjuna, I consider him to be the greatest yogi, who looks upon all others with the equanimity of being on par with oneself — be it in happiness or sorrow.

This is famous as 'The Golden Rule' in English, and has its presence in all the prominent cultures of the world.

A man of good character tries to remove his weaknesses and becomes a Sattvik person (wholesome). He behaves properly and correctly towards his parents, elders, brothers, sisters, friends and other relations and in fact with everybody. "May all prosper within Your will." "Peace be unto all the world." He loves his equals and does not harm anybody. He tells no lies. He remains continent and holds his mind away from bad thoughts.

God is a vital force. He is a vital power. Man's vital fluid is also the energy of life. A continent person must have a good moral character. He should control his senses and lead a virtuous life. Guru Arjan says that he who has conquered his senses, has saved himself from the attack of the five evils - lust, anger, greed, attachment and vanity.

इंद्री जित पंच दोख ते रहत ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी सुखमनी म० 5, पृ० 274)

One, who conquers his sensual instincts is free of the five sinful passions.

A man of good character values his vital fluid more than his life. He always carefully preserves it, because it is the cause of physical, mental and spiritual development. He is always strong and healthy. Laziness does not go near him. His face is never without its natural luster. His mind is steady and his intellect is sharp. All Rishis and Munis have preached its preservation, because it bestows life's energy and its loss leads to death.

मरणं बिंदू पातेन ॥ जीवनं बिंदू धारणात् ॥

-- शिव-संहिता (4:88)

Death is the result of loss of fluid. Its preservation leads to life.

Manu says that young men, while receiving their education, should learn to control their sensual desires. They should, therefore, abstain from alcoholic drinks and spices, etc., which would have a heating effect. They should avoid scents and should not wear scented flower garlands, should

not gamble, should avoid gossip, should not tell lies, should not look at the other sex with lust, should not sleep together and should carefully preserve their vital fluid.

Semen has a vital energy which supports our life. It is the vital life itself. It produces lustre in our eyes and adds colour to our cheeks. It is the vital part of our blood. Scientists consider that forty drops of blood form one drop of this vital fluid. It is a sort of white blood. Dr. Louis also says that it is formed out of vital elements of blood. When we lose even a few drops of blood, we are panic stricken, although it is much less valuable than the vital fluid. We, however waste this vital fluid, which is the king of vitality, recklessly for the pleasure of a few seconds. We are ignorant of its benefits and debase ourselves by wasting it. In order to enjoy sexual pleasures, we drink our own blood and cut the roots of life with our own hands and make others victims of it.

Sensual pleasures are being indulged in on all sides, and the debasement is thought to be a civilized act. Our community and society is unconscious of it. We are in a very wretched state.

Vital fluid is a dynamic force and is the power and energy of soul and God. Lord Krishna says in Gita,

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥

-- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता (7:8)

I am the mystic syllable 'Om' in the Vedic scriptures, the Sound in ether, the seed of virility in man.

It is the essence of our life, intellect and spiritual consciousness. Once lost, it cannot be recouped by tonics, etc. If you preserve it, it will help you in realizing the Lord and in perceiving your soul and imbibing bliss. Premature old age, loss of memory, impotence, diseases of the eyes, lungs, heart and the delicate organs are the results of its excessive loss. Look at the young men and women of today. Their thin and pale faces, weak eyesight and emaciated bodies are a painful sight. We should, therefore, be very cautious and remain celibate and unmarried until the age of at least 24 years. We

shall thus pay uninterrupted attention to our studies. This is the primary stage of celibacy but celibacy up to 36 and 48 years is of the second stage and highest stage respectively. To remain celibate in youth is a saintly quality. "To be good (celibate) in youth is a saintly quality." The more control we have over it, of greater use will it be in later life.

This vital fluid is working in all the energy-giving organs of the body. It is produced from the marrow of the bones. A kind of fluid known as chyle is produced in the intestines after the intake of food. From it blood is formed. Blood produces flesh, which in turn makes fat, and then bones are formed. The marrow of the bones produces semen, which is the most valuable essence of life. It is the most important of all the seven body-forming essences. To preserve it in the body is Brahmacharya ब्रह्मचर्य (celibacy). It is of two kinds, physical and mental, which control respectively the physical and mental activities, Simran सिमरन and Satsang सत्संग (repetition of Holy Names and contemplation on the Form of the Master) help in observing it.

Food for a Celibate

A celibate should eat sattvik (wholesome) food. Milk, rice, pulses, barley, almonds, cream, cheese, butter, vegetables, sago, black pepper and wheat bread help in preservation of celibacy. Such articles as stimulate passions, viz. onion, garlic, meat, wine, mustard oil, asafoetida, red chili, spices, pickles, tea and so forth should better be avoided. These lead to thinning of the fluid and its loss.

Abstinences for a Celibate

In order to be a Brahmachari ब्रह्मचारी (person who observes continence), one should abstain from the following – talking to and hearing about women, looking at them, lewd talk, indecent jokes and touching women. Do not look at a woman with lust. Do not touch a woman with an idea of sex in mind. Do not freely indulge in play and sports with wom-

en. Do not indulge in talking about their beauty or listening to such talk. Do not sit in a solitary place with a woman. Do not think of a woman with a lustful idea. Do not even think of sexual intercourse with a woman, not to speak of actually having it.

Married Life and Spiritual Progress

If after marriage, a woman gives her entire love to her husband and the husband gives all his love to his wife, then what is left to give others? A faithful wife or husband is ready to do everything possible for the other. How can they then love the Lord or His creation? They cannot consider the entire humanity as their family, as they themselves are moving on a narrow sphere. As their progeny increases, their love for the all-pervading Lord decreases. How then can they attain truth?

What then is the remedy for married persons? How can they realize the Lord? There is only one way – it is that their connection with or devotion to each other should not be based on satisfaction of their lust, but they should lead a life of restraint, having sex with the sole object of producing offspring. Their sexual desires should be on the basis of scriptural injunctions. They should have marital relations only once a month, until such time as a child is conceived, whom they should be able to bring up and make self-supporting. They should completely avoid meeting each other during pregnancy and up to the end of the lactation period, which is generally two and a half years. Indulgence during this period would have a bad effect on the child. He would be of bad character and of weak mind. Moreover, frequency could be the cause of several female ailments. If there are one or two children by three or four connections in a lifetime, they do not retard spiritual progress. By leading a pure life, the health of wife and husband is maintained.

Married couples should lead their lives as if they had never been married. They should have pure feelings for

each other. They should bring up the children properly. They should lead their lives doing meritorious deeds. Such a person stands on the same footing as a celibate.

एका नारी सदा जती ।।

He who has only one wife is a celibate.

Saint Paul said:

Love your wives as Christ loved the Church. This means that the life of married couples should be on the basis of pure and religious thoughts.

People did not fully understand the implication of this precept and followed a life of sex and sense enjoyments.

He again wrote and said:

Love the Lord as if you have never had any wives.

The aim of human life is not the production of children alone. Our main aim is to unite the soul with God. A person on the spiritual path should always have this goal in view. The relationship of man and wife after a certain age, say 40 or 50 years, should be discontinued. One should then, while earning his living with his own labour, dedicate his time to the service of the Lord and His creatures.

All Saints and great souls have followed such a path. They led a married life of restraint up to a certain age and thereafter they gave up this aspect of their activity. Swami Ram Tirtha said that as long as men and women do not learn to live as brothers and sisters and lead lives of purity, they cannot hope to make any progress. Lives of persons, who have tasted purity of existence, have been happy, healthy and without worries.

To consider our elders as mothers and others as sisters or daughters will raise a man to a high moral ideal and will relieve him of many troubles of the world. It also increases his mental and physical strength. Others remain weak, unhealthy and are victims of many troubles.

This continence cannot be practiced by control of body alone, for control of mind is essential for the control of the body. Continence should, therefore, be observed with mind,

speech and action. If one controls the body but thinks of sensual pleasures, it is harmful, for the mind pushes the body in that direction. Tulsi Das says,

सत्य वचन आधीनता, परत्रिय मात समान ।

इतनेमें हरि नामिले, तुलसीदास जमान ।।

-- उपदेश रत्नाकर (दोहा 307)

Speak the truth, be humble; and regard the wife of another as mother, if you do not even then realize the Lord hold Tulsi Das responsible.

Continence does not mean that one should merely control his lust and sensual passions. It means actually to withdraw oneself from all the sense desires. If we listen to sensual talks with our ears and see things with our eyes that stimulate passions and yet avoid the sexual urge, it would be like putting one's hand in fire and hoping that it will not be burnt. One should therefore withdraw one's attention and thought from all things which stimulate passion in order to achieve success in one's celibacy. The aim of continence is to try to seek God, because it is a powerful medium for the goal of His realization.

If we lead a life of sensuality, it will have a bad effect upon our children. They will try to copy our actions. The children of today know everything about sense pleasures. This was not so thirty to forty years ago. It is the polluted atmosphere of schools and colleges which affects them. The parents are responsible for leading a sensual life. There is then the education imparted by the teachers and the effect of their degraded lives. Many students lose their continence even before leaving the school and thereby contract many ailments. They lose their attractiveness because of loss of vital fluid. Firmness and sweetness leave them. They cease to be beautiful and comely.

Their memory is impaired. They find it difficult to understand a subject. They are listless. There is pallor on their faces and no lustre in their eyes. They have defective eyesight. They have green and black rings below the eyes.

They become flabby and suffer from pain in the head, back and spinal cord. They suffer from stomach-ache, lack of sleep, palpitation of the heart, slow fever and tuberculosis. They have spermatorrhoea and gonorrhoea, constipation, urinary disorders, piles, diarrhoea and dysentery. There are many advertisements about general and sex tonics by doctors and physicians in the newspapers and there is a brisk sale of such medicines running into millions of rupees. All this points to our debased state.

Brahmacharya ब्रह्मचर्य - Benefits of Chastity

Dr. Nicholson writes:

It is a medical and physiological fact that the best blood in the body goes to form elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life, this matter is re-absorbed and it goes back into circulation, ready to form the finest brain, nerve and muscular tissues. This matter carried back and diffused through his system makes a man manly, brave and heroic.

If one remains celibate, even simple food is sufficient to keep fit and healthy and one will not need medicines and so forth. His life will become pure, his heart and body will be strong and he will attain long life. He will also be able to control his anger and his sense organs. He will have a pure, clean and good heart. He will be virtuous, non-violent and of a good moral character. Thus his children will be a valuable asset to the coming generation.

मरणं बिन्दु पातेन ॥ जीवनं बिन्दू धारणात् ॥

-- शिव-संहिता (4:88)

Chastity is life and sexuality is death.

Nirmal Acharan निर्मल आचरण - Continence

Continence is the most beautiful flower of all human virtues. It makes an angel of a man. Its beauty lies in its own purity, it has the quality of keeping the soul and the body free from any blemish and defect. Continence consists in having no thought of connection with any person other than one's

own wife or husband. It needs very great restraint because chastity may be destroyed by even thinking an evil thought. Fruits remain fresh on the trees, but once they are plucked their freshness is destroyed. One may preserve them for some time by placing them in a jar of honey. Similarly, chastity of a man or woman, once broken, can be protected only by devotion of a very high order. Such a devotion has a protecting influence for the soul, just as honey has for plucked fruit. We are otherwise destroyed like a moth in the fire.

In the beginning, we transgress the limits of continence. Then there is no resistance and we do not try to control the passions. Instead of the right use we put it to a wrong use. Everybody needs chastity. Married couples need it to keep to the path of virtue. In case of separation, he or she needs to pass the rest of the life happily in remembrance of the Lord. No man can see the Lord, without being continent. The Lord cannot manifest Himself in an impure heart. Christ says,

Dogs and the unchaste shall be banished thence. (1st Rev. XX, II 15)

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. (St. Matthew 5:8)

It is necessary to give up desire and lust when on the spiritual path. Maulana Rumi says,

तर्क—शहवत कुन अगर ख्वाही तू होश,

जांकिह् शहवतबाज़ बंदो—चश्मो—गोश ।

— मौलाना रूमी

If you desire consciousness and awareness of the soul, give up lust and passion, as these shut our Inner Eye, which cannot see the Light (Jyoti) of God, nor can our Inner Ear hear the Celestial Music within.

Give up lust if you want awareness, for it closes the eye and the ear.

Human bodies are like mirrors of glass, which cannot be carried together, because they are liable to be broken by striking against each other. Even the pure rainwater becomes dirty as soon as it touches the earth. Therefore, do not allow anyone to touch you even in innocent play or love. It may be that your chastity remains intact, yet some damage is done to freshness of purity and the sweet smell of beauty. If you are

ashamed by allowing another to touch you, then your continence is affected. To preserve the chastity, the company of lustful men and women should be avoided, as their speech has the effect of injecting poison in you, and this becomes the cause of ruin of your chastity.

Keep the company of pure men. If you cannot meet them, contemplate lovingly on the Master. In this way, your inner dirt would be washed. Do not, therefore, permit anybody to spoil your chastity. In order to be chaste, you should avoid the company of such persons, as are given to sensual enjoyments. The poison of their lustful ideas will surely affect those who come across them. You should always keep the company of pure and chaste persons. If you fail to get such a company, meditate on the form of the Master with love and devotion. In this manner, your inner impurities will gradually be washed out.

Tolstoy says,

One should preserve one's vital fluid. He should not only abstain from evil action, but should keep his thoughts pure and clean and should not besmear the soul with the dirt of sins and evil ideas.

He should, in other words, be a true and perfect celibate. Husband and wife both should lead a life of restraint and should suppress their urge. With the birth of desired children, they should give up their relationship of man and wife and engage themselves in the development and education of their children, who should be given proper guidance on the path of virtue so that they, in due course, may turn out to be true devotees of God.

Buddha says,

One should not cause pain to anybody. He should behave with others as he would himself like to be treated by others. Evil thoughts must be kept under control. It is necessary to control the lustful desires and senses in order to be virtuous. Lust and sensual pleasures lead to trouble. They are the cause of disputes, pains and worries in this world.

Zoroaster says,

You should work together with your companions. It is not necessary to remain separate from each other, but your way of life must be pure.

Lao-tze says,

I have three precious things which I value greatly: Compassion, Economy and Humility. By compassion I try to become brave; by economy I can be the leader of men.

He further says,

For you, it is enough that you should know your own self and be chaste. Do not punish others after quarrelling with them. Do not be satisfied only with the purity of your talks and actions. You should be pure in mind. Then you may be the leader of others.

Sant Charan Das says,

शील बड़ो ही योग है, जो करि जानै कोय ।
 शीलविहीनो चरणदास, कबहूँ मुक्त न होय ।।
 सब शुभ लक्षण तो विषे, शील न आया एक ।
 जप तप निष्फल जाहिंगे, चरणहि दास विवेक ।।...
 शील अंग ऊँचो अधिक, उन्तीसों के बीच ।
 जा घट शील न आइया, सो घट कहिये नीच ।।
 शील बिना नरकै परै, शील बिना यम दण्ड ।
 शील बिना भरमत फिरै, सात द्वीप नौ खण्ड ।।

-- संत चरणदास, श्री भक्तिसागर (पृ० 232)

Good character is a yoga of high merit if one knows it. O Charan Das, without good character no one obtains emancipation. If you possess all virtues but have no character, your Jap-Tap (recitations and austerities) will be in vain. Learn discrimination at His feet. Character occupies a high position among the thirty virtues. The mind that has no character is debased. Without character, one goes to hell and is subject to death. Without character, he wanders all over the world.

He further says that with good character, all other virtues remain intact just as an army functions properly while under the control of a commander. Nothing remains after truth departs. With the loss of character, all virtues are lost. When there is no fence, how can the field of devotion be protected? He who is not of good character in youth,

loses his health. When the face is pale, what is the use of repentance? With the loss of character, man's stature is lowered in the eyes of the world. Man is rebuked like a dog. He is not honoured anywhere. It is an invaluable advice that you should be of good character. You would be redeemed and would meet the Lord. Therefore, bathe in the pool of good character and serve the Lord. There is no other place of pilgrimage like it.

शील रहते सब रहें, जेते हैं शुभ अंग ।
 ज्यों राजा के रहे ते, रहै फौज को संग ॥
 सत्य गया तो क्या रहा, शील गया सब झाड़ ।
 भक्ति खेत कैसे बचै, टूट गई जब बाड़ ॥
 ज्वानी शील न राखिया, बिगड़ गई सब देह ।
 अब पछितावा क्या करे, मुख पर उड़िया खेह ॥
 शील गये शोभा घटे, या दुनिया के माहिं ।
 कूकर ज्यों झिड़क्यो फिरे, कहीं भी आदर नाहिं ॥...
 लाख यही उपदेश है, एक शील कूँ राख ।
 जन्म सुधारो हरि मिलो, चरणदास की साख ॥...
 शील सरोवर न्हाय करि, करो राम की सेव ।
 या सम तीरथ और ना, कहिया गुरु शुकदेव ॥

-- संत चरनदास, श्री भक्तिसागर (पृ० 233-34)

With good character all the good virtues remain, just as the army remains with the commander. When truth is lost, nothing remains; with loss of character, all is lost. How can the field of devotion be saved when the fence is broken? Good character was not kept in youth and health deteriorated. What is the use of repentance when one has lost face? With loss of character, the position in the world is lost. He is rebuked like a dog, and is not respected anywhere.

The best advice is to be of a good moral character. The life is redeemed and the Lord is realized. Bathe in the pool of good character and serve the Lord. Shuk Dev says that there is no pilgrimage like it.

In 'Pran Sangli', Guru Nanak has described beautifully the merits of observing continence and demerits of not doing so.

बिंद बिंद सभ कोई कहै। महा बिंदू कोई बिरला लहै॥
Everybody talks of vital drop, seldom does one know super vital drop.
 महाँ बिंदु महिं लाल बनाया। जिनी चीना तिन ही जन पाया॥
Super vital drop is the jewel. Those who search for it, find it.
 तत्त बिंदु की क्यों मिति आवै। जब बधै तब ही मिति पावै॥
Who can know it? One who contemplates, finds it.
 बिंदु भरोसे इन्द्री कसी। रौंड़ी कै डरि बन महिं बसी॥
One ties a cloth tightly over the organ. One lives in a forest to be away from women.

नेत्र न सोवहिं बिन्दु गिरन ते। मन बांधे चहुँ कुढ़ फिरन ते॥
One does not close his eyes (sleep) for fear of loss of fluid. The mind, however, wanders in all directions.

दह दिशि धावत इह मन बाँधा। नानक महा रत्न बिंदु ते लाघा॥
The mind which is running in the ten directions is controlled. O Nanak! the most precious jewel is found because of this control.
 बाँधी बिंदु रत्न जब पाया। बिंदु बाँधी जब मन ठहराया॥
The jewel is got by controlling the fluid. The mind is controlled by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी जब जोति प्रगासी। बिंदु बाँधी जब मिल्या अबिनासी॥
Light appears by controlling the fluid. The Lord is realized by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब पिंड थिर पाया। बिंदु बाँधी जब अमर ठहराया॥
The body becomes pure by controlling the fluid. Man becomes immortal by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी जब आपि आप जाना। बिंदु बाँधी जब तत्त प्रगताना॥
One knows oneself by controlling the fluid. One approaches Truth by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी जब ब्रह्म कौर लिया। नानक बिंदु बाँधी फिरि गरभ न गलिया॥
One realizes the Lord by controlling the fluid. O Nanak! One is freed from rebirth by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब रहत सभ जानी। बिंदु बाँधी तब जोति प्रगतानी॥
One knows all the secrets by controlling the fluid. One sees Light by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब बिनम गढ़ साधा। बिंदु बाँधी तब अभय पद लाघा॥
One conquers difficulties by controlling the fluid. One becomes fearless by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब उपमा त्यागी। बिंदु बाँधी तब अगम धुनि लागी॥

One sheds pretences by controlling the fluid. One hears the unknowable Melody by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब जोग मिति पाई। बिंदु बाँधी तब शिव जुगति आई॥

One takes to yoga by controlling the fluid. One knows the Lord by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब क्षिमा मन आवै। बिंदु बाँधी ते रत्न मिति पावै॥

One becomes compassionate by controlling the fluid. One gets keen intellect by controlling the fluid.

बिंदु बाँधी तब काया बीचारी। नानक कोट मध्ये कोई रत्न ब्योहारी॥

One knows the secrets of the body by controlling the fluid. O Nanak! There is seldom such a jewel among the millions.

रत्न की सार कोई और न जानै॥ रत्न की जोति कोई जौहरी पिछानै॥

No one knows the quality of a jewel. Only a jeweller knows the lustre of a jewel.

रत्न जोति कौ कोई जौहरी पावै। रत्न की जोति मिति आखि सुनावै॥

When a jeweller knows the lustre of a jewel, he then gives out the quality of the jewel.

रत्नों का पारखू रत्न कौ पावै। बिन जौहरी नाँ परख्या जावै॥

Only a connoisseur can find a jewel. No one but a jeweller can recognize a jewel.

रत्न कै पारखू रत्न मनि जरिया। रत्नों कै पारखू रत्न हथि चढ़िया॥

The jewel lights the mind of the connoisseur of the jewel. Only the connoisseur of the jewel obtains the jewel.

रत्न कै पारखू रत्न मोल लीया। नानक रत्नों कै पारखू रत्न बशि कीया॥

A connoisseur buys the jewel. O Nanak! A jewel dwells in the control of the connoisseur.

जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब जोति पसारी। जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब लागी धुन तारी॥

When the jewel is got, its Light spreads. When the jewel is got, attention is fixed in Melody.

जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब सुन्न समाया। जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब अगम दृष्टाया॥

When the jewel is got, one merges in the spiritual regions. When the jewel is got, the unknowable is perceived.

जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब बिमल जुगति पाई। जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब भई शीतलाई॥

When the jewel is got, the wonderful method is found. When the jewel is got, peace is obtained.

जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब सम मिति जानी। जब रत्न हथि चढ़िया तब भये मुनि ध्यानी॥

When the jewel is got, all the wisdom is acquired. When the jewel is got, one engages in contemplation.

सुन्न समाधि का पाया जिन रूप । नानक तिस हथि चढ़िया रत्न अनूप ॥
One who obtains the form of the spiritual regions, obtains the peerless jewel.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिनि रत्न गुँवाया । जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो गरभ महिं आया ॥
Those who waste the fluid lose the jewel. Those who waste the fluid are reborn.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो फिरै चौरासी । जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो परै यम फाँसी ॥
Those who waste the fluid undergo the cycle of eighty-four. Those who waste the fluid are over-powered by death.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिस पिंड धरि पाई । जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिस काल सताई ॥
Those who waste the fluid have ailing bodies. Those who waste the fluid are tyrannized by Kaal.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिन सब किछु गुँवाया । जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिनि महा दुख पाया ॥
Those who waste the fluid lose all. Those who waste the fluid suffer greatly.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिस कौ खरी भारी । जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिस करै जम ख्वारी ॥
Those who waste the fluid get into difficulties. Those who waste the fluid are ill-treated by Yama (death).

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिन अंत दुख होसी । नानक जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो अंत कौ रोसी ॥
Those who waste the fluid suffer in the end. O Nanak! He who wastes the fluid shall have to weep.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो जन्म फिरि आवै । जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो सदा दुख पावै ॥
He who wastes the fluid has to be reborn. He who wastes the fluid always suffers.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिन नरक घर बाँधा । जिनि बिन्दु खोई तिनि महा दुख लाघा ॥
He who wastes the fluid secures a place in hell. He who wastes the fluid gets into extreme troubles.

जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो गर्भ महिं गलै । जिनि बिन्दु खोई सो अग्नि ज्यों जलै ॥
He who wastes the fluid again enters the womb. He who wastes the fluid burns like fire.

बिन्दु खोई का एही बिचारु । नानक बिन्दु खोई फिरि फिरि अवतारु ॥
These are the consequences of waste of fluid. O Nanak! He who wastes the fluid is born again and again.

जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी पर त्रिया जोहहि । जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से अंत बहिं रोवहि ॥

He who does not control the fluid visits the wives of others. He who does not control the fluid weeps to the end.

जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से धरमि न धावहि । जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से अंत पछुतावहि ॥

He who does not control the fluid is not able to carry out the Dharma (duties). He who does not control the fluid repents in the end.

जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से स्वान ज्यों झूठे । जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से पावक मँझ लूठे ॥
He who does not control the fluid is false like a dog. He who does not control the fluid is burnt by fire.

जिनि बिन्दु नहिं साधी से फिरहिं मुँह काले । बिन्दु कै सादि जीअ नरक महिं घाले ॥
He who does not control the fluid is degraded socially. He who does not control the fluid is sent to hell.

बिन्दु कै सादि होय रहिया दिवाना । नानक बिन्दु खोय कै पछोताना ॥
He who does not control the fluid is unwise. O Nanak! He who wastes the fluid repents.

बिन्दु चीने का कैसा स्वाद । बिन्दु चीनै पेखै बिस्माद ॥
What is the benefit of self-control? By self-control depression disappears.

बिन्दु चीने का लक्षण कौन । बिन्दु चीने सूझै सभ भवन ॥
Who can describe the benefits of self-control? By self-control one gets knowledge of all worlds.

बिन्दु चीने का क्या परकार । बिन्दु चीने तरै संसार ॥
What is the use of self-control? By self-control one crosses the ocean of the world.

बिन्दु चीने तिस सभ आसान । बिन्दु चीने सो रहे निरबान ॥
By self-control one gets everything. By self-control one gets emancipation.

-- प्राण-संगली भाग-1 (पृ० 24-27)

Guna Grahakta गुण-ग्राहकता - **Imbibing Virtues**

The Lord is the storehouse of all virtues. The soul, which imbibes virtues, realizes the Lord and is dear to Him. Such a soul is blessed. Those virtues, by imbibing which, the soul is honoured at the door of the Lord, are classed under fourteen heads in the hymns. Those should be carefully considered and imbibed.

There are many virtues in the Lord. The soul that imbibes them finds the Lord and is dear to Him. She is the happy bride who is dear to the Lord.

लाल बहु गुणि कामणि मोही ॥ तेरे गुण होहि न अवरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 359)

O Love, I am fascinated by Your many virtues. Your Glorious Virtues are not found in any other.

गुणवंती सचु पाइआ तृसना तजि विकार ॥

गुर सबदी मनु रंगिआ रसना प्रेम पिआरि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 36)

The virtuous one found the truth by giving up desire for evil. She dyed her mind in the Shabd of the Guru and uttered the words of love and endearment with her tongue.

सचु सलाही सचि लगा सचै नाइ तृपति होइ ॥

गुण वीचारी गुण संग्रहा अवगुण कढा धोइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 37)

Praise the Truth, practice the Truth and only True Name can satisfy. Meditate on virtues, imbibe virtues and give up evil.

मेरा मनो मेरा मनु राता राम पिआरे राम ॥

सचु साहिबो आदि पुरखु अपरंपरो धारे राम ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 437)

My mind, O my mind is attuned to the Love of my Beloved Lord. The True Lord Master, the Primal Being, the Infinite One, is the Support of the earth.

हरि गुण सारी ता कंत पिआरी नामे धरी पिआरो ॥

नानक कामणि नाह पिआरी राम नामु गलि हारो ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पूरबी म० 3, पृ० 244)

He who realizes the Name and imbibes the virtues of the Lord is dear to Him. O Nanak, the soul-bride who wears the necklace of the Lord's Name around her neck is loved by her Husband Lord.

गुणा का होवै वासुला कढि वासु लईजै ॥

जे गुण होवन्हि साजना मिलि साझ करीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 1, पृ० 765)

One who has a basket of fragrant virtues, should enjoy its fragrance. If my friends possess virtues, I will share in them.

What Are Those Virtues?

- Repeating the Name and feeling the presence of Paar Brahm (Transcendental Lord)

जिनी नामु पछाणिआ तिन विटहु बलि जाउ ।।

आपु छोडि चरणी लगा चला तिन कै भाइ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 30)

I am a sacrifice to them who know the Name. Renouncing selfishness, I fall at their feet, and walk in harmony with His Will.

गुर का सबदु करि दीपको इह सत की सेज बिछाइ री ।।

आठ पहर कर जोड़ि रहु तउ भेटै हरि राइ री ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 400)

Make the Shabd of the Guru your light and the truth the bed. And stand before Him with folded hands all the time. Then only will the Lord meet you.

हरि गुण सारी ता कंत पिआरी नामे धरी पिआरो ।।

नानक कामणि नाह पिआरी राम नामु गलि हारो ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पमरवी म० 3, पृ० 243)

He who realizes the Name and imbibes the virtues of the Lord is dear to Him. O Nanak, it is not she who is dear. It is so because of the necklace of Name.

गुणवंती सचु पाइआ तृसना तजि विकार ।।

गुर सबदी मनु रंगिआ रसना प्रेम पिआरि ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 3, पृ० 36)

The virtuous one found the truth by giving up desire for evil. She dyed her mind in the Shabd of the Guru and uttered the words of love and endearment with her tongue.

जिसु सरब सुखा फल लोड़ीअहि सो सचु कमावउ ।।

नेडै देखउ पारब्रह्म इकु नामु धिआवउ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 322)

He who desires bliss should practice Truth. He sees the Transcendental One near him and contemplates on the Name.

- Giving up egoism and singing the praises of the Lord, and loving Him

विचहु आपु गवाए हरि गुण गाए अनदिनु लागा भाओ ।।

सुणि सखी सहेली जीअ की मेली गुर कै सबदि समाओ ।।

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी पुरवी म० 3, पृ० 243)

Eradicating selfishness and conceit from within, and singing the Glorious Praises of the Lord night and day, she (the soul-bride) is in love with the Lord. Listen, dear friends and companions of the soul – immerse yourselves in the Guru's Shabd.

होई राजे राम की रखवाली॥

सूख सहज आनंद गुण गावहु मनु तनु देह सुखाली॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सोरठ म० 5, पृ० 620)

I am under the protection of the Lord. I sing His praises in utter equipoise with restful body and heart.

गुण गावहि गुण उचरहि गुण महि सवै समाइ॥

नानक गुर पूरे ते पाइआ सहजि मिलिआ प्रभु आइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक वारां ते वधीक म० 4, पृ० 1423)

They sing His Praises, and chant His Praises; in His Glorious Praises, they sleep in absorption. O Nanak, through the Perfect Guru, they come to meet God with intuitive placidity.

इकि गुण विहाझहि अउगण विकणहि गुर कै सहजि सुभाइ॥

गुर सेवा ते नाउ पाइआ वुठा अंदरि आइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 3, पृ० 427)

Those who acquire merits and discard their demerits, through the Guru, they obtain peace and poise. Serving the Guru, they obtain the Name, which comes to dwell deep within them.

मनु तनु सीतलु सांति होइ तृसना अगनि बुझाइ॥

सुखा सिरि सदा सुखु होइ जा विचहु आपु गवाइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 3, पृ० 588)

He gets the Name by service of the Master and it is enshrined inside him. Mind and body become peaceful and the fire of desires is extinguished. The supreme comforts and lasting peace are obtained, when one eradicates ego from within.

- Not injuring the feelings of others

इकु फिका न गालाइ सभना मै सचा धणी॥

हिआउ न कैही ठाहि माणक सभ अमोलवे॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1384)

Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord and Master abides in all. Do not break anyone's heart as all are pure pearls. (Farid)

सभना मन माणिक ठाहणु मूलि मचांगवा ॥

जे तउ पिरीआ दी सिक हियाउ न ठाहे कही दा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोका सेख फरीद, पृ० 1384)

All hearts are like pearls, do not hurt them if you want to be beloved of the Lord. Do not break any heart. (Farid)

- Not being rude; instead using sweet words

जितु बोलिऐ पति पाईऐ सो बोलिआ परवाणु ॥

फिका बोलि विगुचणा सुणि मूरख मन अजाण ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 15)

That speech is blessed which brings honour. Listen, O foolish and ignorant mind – harsh words bring only grief.

जाइ पुछहु सोहागणी तुसी राविआ किनी गुणी ॥

सहजि संतोखि सीगारीआ मिठा बोलणी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 17)

Ask the blessed bride, what has made her dear to her Lord. It was contentment, simple dressing and sweet speech.

- Living in awe of the Lord

सेखा अंदरहु जोरु छडि तू भउ करि झलु गवाइ ॥

गुर कै भै केते निसतरे भै विचि निरभउ पाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़ा म० 3, पृ० 551)

O Sheikh, give up self-consciousness and abide in the fear of the Lord. Shed thy craziness. You will get release by living in awe of the Master, and through it realize the Fearless.

भै विचि बैसै भै रहै भै विचि कमावै कार ॥

ऐथै सुखु विडआईआ दरगह मोख दुआर ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (ब्रजरी म० 3, पृ० 516)

One who dwells, remains and acts in the Fear of God, obtains peace and glory in the Lord's Court, and at the Gate of Salvation.

- Living within His Will and giving up duality or otherness

भरता कहै सु मानीऐ एहु सीगारु बणाइ री ॥

दूजा भाउ विसारीऐ एहु तंबोला खाइ री ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 400)

Do as willed by the Lord and this is your embellishment. Give up duality and this is chewing of betel leaves by you.

गुरमुखीआ सोहागणी तिन दइआ पर्ई मनि आइ ॥

सतिगुर वचनु रतनु है जो मने सु हरि रसु खाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 4, पृ० 41)

The ever blessed bride who loves the Master is always full of compassion. The words of the Master are jewels and he who accepts them enjoys the nectar of the Lord's love.

- Giving up cravings and evil tendencies

गुणवंती सचु पाइआ तृसना तजि विकार ॥

गुर सबदी मनु रंगिआ रसना प्रेम पिआरि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीख म० 3, पृ० 36)

The virtuous one found the truth by giving up desires for evil. She dyed her mind in the Shabd of the Guru and uttered the words of love and endearment with her tongue.

मनु तनु सीतलु सांति होइ तृसना अग्नि बुझाइ ॥

सुखा सिरि सदा सुखु होइ जा विचहु आपु गवाइ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (वडहंस म० 3, पृ० 588)

The mind and body are cooled and soothed; peace ensues, and the fire of desire is quenched. The greatest comforts and lasting peace are obtained, when one eradicates selfishness from within.

- Giving up egoism and not talking ill of others

हउमै पीर गई सुखु पाइआ आरोगत भए सरीरा ॥

गुर परसादी ब्रह्मु पछाता नानक गुणी गहीरा ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सूही म० 4, पृ० 773)

The pain of egoism is expelled. Bliss is experienced and body is without any disease. O Nanak, by the Grace of the Master, The Lord of the unfathomable virtue has been revealed.

जा रहणा नाही ऐतु जगि ता काइतु गारबि हंढीऐ ॥

मंदा किसै न आखीऐ पड़ि अखरु एहो बुझीऐ ॥ मूरखै नालि न लुझीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा की वार म० 1, पृ० 473)

When you are not to remain here, why are you proud? Not to call anyone bad and not to argue with a fool, is the essence of the studies of the scriptures.

पर दारा पर धनु पर लोभा हउमै बिखै बिकार॥

दुसट भाउ तजि निंद पराई कामु क्रोधु चंडार॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 1, पृ० 1255)

You covet the wife or wealth of another and are afflicted with the evil of egoism. Give up evil thoughts, talking ill of others, lust and wrath.

- Doing good even to the evil-minded. Not indulging in wrath. Living in humility and contemplating upon oneself

फरीदा बुरे दा भला करि गुसा मनि न हढाइ॥

देही रोगु न लगई पलै सभु किछु पाइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1382)

O Farid, do good for evil, and do not give shelter to the fire of wrath in the mind. Your body would be without disease and you would have everything you desire.

फरीदा जो तै मारनि मुकीआं तिन्हा न मारे घुमि॥

आपनडै घरि जाईऐ पैर तिन्हा दे चुमि॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1378)

O Farid, if one gives you a slap, do not give him a fist blow. Kiss his feet and go to your house. (Farid)

रोसु न काहू संग करहु आपन आपु बीचारि॥

होइ निमाना जगि रहहु नानक नदरी पारि॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी म० 5, पृ० 259)

Do not be angry with anyone, look within your own self instead. Be humble in this world. O Nanak, and by His Grace you shall be carried across.

सुखी बसै मसकीनीआ आपु निवारि तले॥

बडे बडे अहंकारीआ नानक गरबि गले॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी सुखमणी म० 5, पृ० 278)

The poor live in peace after giving up egoism, O Nanak. The high and mighty have fallen prey to their own pride.

सभु को निवै आप कउ पर कउ निवै न कोइ॥

धरि ताराजू तोलीऐ निवै सु गउरा होइ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 470)

He who bows to all and none bows to him, if he is weighed in a scale, his pan would be heavier.

अपराधी दूणा निवै जो हंता मिरगाहि ॥

सीसि निवाइऐ क्किए थीऐ जा रिदै कुसुधे जाहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 1, पृ० 470)

Sinner bows twice as much as a hunter of deer. But all bowing is useless if there is evil in the heart.

- Giving up lust, wrath, greed, attachment and evil thinking, and serving in humility. Abstaining from coveting the wife, wealth and possessions of others. Not indulging in evil thoughts or back-biting and living in peace

पर दारा पर धनु पर लोभा हउमै बिखै बिकार ॥

दुसट भाउ तजि निंद पराई कामु क्रोधु चंडार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मलार म० 1, पृ० 1255)

You covet the wife or wealth of another and are afflicted with the evil of egoism. Give up evil thoughts, talking ill of others, lust and wrath.

कामु क्रोधु लोभु मोहु मिटावै छुटकै दुरमति अपुनी धारी ॥

होइ निमाणी सेव कमावहि ता प्रीतम होवहि मनि पिआरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़े की वार म० 5, पृ० 377)

If one removes lust, wrath, greed and attachment, gives up evil and self-seeking, becomes humble and serves the Lord, then he is dear to Him.

सांती विचि कार कमावणी सा खसमु पाए थाइ ॥

नानक कामि क्रोधि किनै न पाइओ पुछहु गिआनी जाइ ॥

- आदि ग्रन्थ (बिहागड़े की वार म० 3, पृ० 551)

He who lives in peace finds a place with the Lord. O Nanak, a lustful and wrathful person has never ever found God – go and ask any wise man.

- Adopting truth, contentment, compassion and forgiveness

सतु संतोखु दइआ कमावै एह करणी सार ॥

आपु छोडि सभ होइ रेणा जिसु देइ प्रभु निरंकार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीखग म० 5, पृ० 51)

To engage in truth, contentment and compassion is the secret of doing meritorious deeds. One can give up egoism and become the dust of the feet of others only through the Grace of the Transcendental Lord.

खिमा विहूणे खपि गए खूहणि लख असंख ॥

गणत न आवै किउ गणी खपि खपि मुए बिसंख ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली ओंकार म० 1, पृ० 937)

Without patience and forgiveness, so many have perished; their numbers cannot be counted. Bothered and bewildered, countless numbers have died.

जाइ पुछहु सोहागणी तुसी राविआ किनी गुणी ॥

सहजि संतोखि सीगारीआ मिठा बोलणी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 1, पृ० 17)

Go, and ask the happy soul-brides, "By what virtuous qualities do you enjoy your Husband Lord?" "We are adorned with placidity, contentment and sweet words."

- Giving up doubts, seeking the Lord, knowing oneself, considering the Lord as omnipresent and all-pervading, and serving the Saints

भरमु चुकावहु गुरमुखि लिव लावहु आतमु चीनहु भाई ॥

निकटि करि जाणहु सदा प्रभु हाजरु किसु सिउ करहु बुराई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 883)

Give up your doubts, turn God-ward and know yourself. The Lord is always present in you. How could you try to hurt anyone?

सद ही निकटि जानउ प्रभ सुआमी सगल रेण होइ रहीऐ ॥

साधू संगति होइ परापति ता प्रभु अपुना लहीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (टोडी म० 5, पृ० 713)

Know the Lord to be ever present with you and become the dust of the feet of all. Keep company of the Saints and make the Lord your own.

जिसु सरब सुखा फल लोड़ीअहि सो सचु कमावउ ॥

नेडै देखउ पारब्रह्म इकु नामु धिआवउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउड़ी की वार म० 5, पृ० 322)

He who desires bliss should practice Truth; he sees the Transcendental One near him and contemplates on the Name.

संता की होइ दासरी एहु अचारा सिखु री ॥

सगल गुणा गुण ऊतमो भरता दूरि न पिखु री ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 400)

Be you the slave of the Saints, their contact leads to Peace. The best of all virtues, however, is that the Lord is near you.

दासनि दास दास होइ रहीऐ जो जन राम भगत निज भईआ ॥

मनु बुधि अरिप धरउ गुर आगै गुर परसादी मै अकथु कथईआ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (विलावल म० 4, पृ० 834)

Become the slave of the slave of Him who is dear to the Lord. Surrender your mind and intellect to the Master and by the Master's Grace utter the Unutterable.

चरण पखारि करउ गुर सेवा आतम सुधु बिखु तिआस निवारी ॥

दासन की होइ दासि दासरी ता पावहि सोभा हरि दुआरी ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 377)

Wash the feet of the Guru and serve Him and give up desires for evil. Become the slave of His slave and you will be honoured at His door.

- Becoming the dust of all, considering all as friends, seeing the Lord in all and not injuring any living being

सद ही निकटि जानउ प्रभ सुआमी सगल रेण होइ रहीऐ ॥

साधू संगति होइ परापति ता प्रभु अपुना लहीऐ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (टोडी म० 5, पृ० 713)

Know the Lord to be ever present with you and become the dust of the feet of all. Keep the company of the Saints and make the Lord your own.

सभ की रेनु होइ रहै मनूआ सगले दीसहि मीत पिआरे ॥

सभ मधे रविआ मेरा ठाकुरु दानु देत सभि जीअ सम्हारे ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (आसा म० 5, पृ० 379)

O mind, become the dust of all and all should appear as friends. The Lord pervades all and sustains them with His Mercy.

होइ सगल की रेणुका हरि संगि समावउ ॥

दूखु न देई किसै जीअ पति सिउ घरि जावउ ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (गउडी की वार म० 5, पृ० 322)

Become the dust of all and identify yourself with the Lord. Do not injure anyone and go to your Lord's house.

सतु संतोखु दइआ कमावै एह करणी सार ॥

आपु छोडि सभ होइ रेणा जिसु देइ प्रभु निरंकार ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सिरीराग म० 5, पृ० 51)

To engage in truth, contentment and compassion is the secret of doing meritorious deeds. One who is so blessed by the Formless Lord God renounces selfishness, and becomes the dust of all.

एक जोति एको मनि वसिआ सभ ब्रह्म द्रसटि इकु कीजै ॥

आतम रामु सभ एकै है पसरे सभ चरन तले सिरु दीजै ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (कलिआन म० 4, पृ० 1325)

There is one Light. That One dwells in all hearts. See the same Brahm (Lord) in all. The soul and the Lord are one and pervade all. Bow to all.

फरीदा खालकु खलक महि खलक वसै रब माहि ॥

मंदा किस नो आखीऐ जां तिसु बिनु कोई नाहि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (सलोक सेख फरीद, पृ० 1381)

O Farid, the Lord pervades the creation and the creation is in the Lord. How can anyone be called bad when there is none other than Him?

भरमु चुकावहु गुरुमुखि लिव लावहु आतमु चीनहु भाई ॥

निकटि करि जाणहु सदा प्रभु हाजरु किसु सिउ करहु बुराई ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (रामकली म० 5, पृ० 883)

Give up your doubts, turn Godward and know yourself. The Lord is always present in you. How can you then do evil?

- Admitting death as a fact and giving up longing for the future.

पहिला मरणु कबूलि जीवण की छडि आस ॥

होहु सभना की रेणुका तउ आउ हमारै पासि ॥

-- आदि ग्रन्थ (मारु की वार म० 5, पृ० 1102)

First, accept death, and give up any hope in living. Become the dust of the feet of all, and then, you may come to Me. m